ESSAYS ON
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

IN HONOUR OF
D. M. GUPTA

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ABOUT THE BOOK

A book on Rabindranath Tagore needs no publicity. One of the greatest literary figures of this century, Tagore can not be described in fullness in one volume. However, this book has its own uniqueness in the sense that it deals with many unexplored aspects of Tagore's literary personality. For example no book on Tagore discusses Tagore's studies in Russia and interpretations given of his works in the light of various Indian and foreign writers. Chapters like Tagore and Hafiz, Tagore and Jaidev, Gitanjali and Psaltier, Tagore and Kabir are interesting contributions to the existing Tagore scholarship.

Rs. 225

For Shri Sushil Kumar
Sharma with love

Lakhan

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ESSAYS ON RABINDRANATH TAGORE

IN HONOUR OF D. M. GUPTA

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A scholastic collection

SPENGLER, talking of Soul-Image And Life-Feeling, says: Every professed philosopher is forced to believe, without serious examination, in the existence of Something that in his opinion is capable of being handled by the reason, for his whole spiritual existence depends on the possibility of such a Something. For every logician and psychologist, therefore, however sceptical he may be, there is a point at which criticism falls silent and faith begins. ... "Soul", for the man who has advanced from the mere living and feeling to the alert and observant state, is an image derived from quite primary experiences of life and death. It is as old as thought, i.e., as the articulate separation of thinking from seeing. We see the world around us... the accumulating daily detail of technical and empirical experience becomes a stock of permanent data which man, as soon as he is proficient in speech, collects into an **image** of what he **understands**... What is not environment we do not see, but we do divine "its" presence in ourselves and in others, and by virtue of "its" physiognomic impressive power it evokes in us the anxiety and the desire to know; .... The image of the soul is mythic and remains objective in the field of spiritual religion so long as the image of Nature is contemplated in the spirit of religion.

Tagore, as a poet and creator of speech imagery of a mystical kind, illustrates this. The style of his picture corresponds to the style of his soul and also to the style of our own. He was capable of defining the microcosmos in relation to the macrocosmos. Tagore's mysticism therefore, provides an inexhaustible stock of material for Tagore scholars. And, this is not the first time that Tagoreana has been used to say a "thank you". However, this is perhaps the first time outside Bengal's publishing sphere that such a scholastic collection has been brought out in English.

The contributors are many and distinguished. Among the essays included are those of Sisir Ghose on mysticism and literature, K. K. Sharma on art and personality focusing on the poet's aesthetic philosophy, A. P. Gnatyuk-Danil'chuk on Tagore studies in Czarist Russia.

The book certainly succeeds in giving the reader more than a quick glimpse of Tagore and the rest of the poetic world within the parameters of its 300 pages as it also includes essays on Tagore in relation to Pound, Kabir and Hafiz. Unity among the assorted pieces has been attempted by a common theme — that of mysticism. Varied subjects such as the imagery in Gitanjali, the theme of alienation in Gitanjali and Tagore's rehabilitation of Kabir have been clubbed together to lend weight to the poet's image as a mystic. "That imposing prophet-like portrait — dreamy eyes, flowing beard, toe-deep cloak and all that..." as J. P. Savita describes him.

Savita, comparing the Gitanjali and the Psalter, however warns of the tendency to reduce Tagore to the status of a Eastern mystic. He reminds Tagore buffs that the poet was essentially "an Indian educated by European methods, he had read his Romantics and Victorians". Besides being influenced by Wordsworth, Shelly, Tennyson and Browning he was definitely under the spell of King James's Bible. Discussing the Book of Psalms and Gitanjali, Savita points out how natural it was for Tagore to turn instinctively (even calculatingly) to these hymns (in their English form) as a model for the translation of his song offerings, the translations that he himself did. The Psalter teems with eastern minstrelsy and reviewing the Gitanjali the Times Literary Supplement of December 1912 said, "We seem to be reading the Psalms of David of our times". Nor did Erza Pound fail in noting the similarities. Tagore also employed the same stylistic device, i.e. the question-answer technique, of ancient literature.

Yet, "We cannot speak of him as a wise rishi or a mythological figure that exists outside time and space" because "his creative life is immortal and at the same time has definite historical limits" says Alexander Senkevitch in another essay on the poet's influence on India's new poetry. He notes how, Ivbulis and Serebryany showed that Tagore's evolution is marked by transition from the egocentric lyricist immersed in his inner world to a World Poet.

Despite the Western and the Biblical influences, no one can deny that often Tagore touched "those heights of poetic excellence and subtlety and suavity of expression which are native to the Persian poet". In this context is discussed the Persian influence on the Tagore family, especially Hafiz. Also his rehabilitation of Kabir steeped in Sufy mysticism and philosophy.

From time immemorial one mystic has cast his or her spell on another. It is in this manner that mystical values effect literary responses and this ism spreads its wings. That is why when one thinks of mysticism that one also thinks of poetry. Like every Sufi has a Guru, every poet has an influence or several of them. This is how also we come to the birth of this book.

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Papri Sri Raman

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h.

ral hundred people in Ahmednagar ict, either to migrate and end up in lums of Bombay or to work on the r baron's land — cutting and load- he cane.

reatened by the clout of the sugar ns and the increasing pollution farmers of Chitali began to orga- themselves in the late '70s. In 1980, t 90 farmers got together to consti- a **pradushan samiti** and launched gitation against the pollution. On mber 11 of the same year, they hed to the distillery and made their nds known. The Western Mahar- ra Development Corporation DC) and the District Collector of ednagar appointed a commission of iry to investigate the allegations of twash pollution. Based on the com- e's report, the WMDC was compel- pay a compensation of Rs 7 lakh to 0 farmers whose crops were dam- over a period of five years.

verely affected farmers were paid at ate of Rs 2,500 per acre and those ed less affected were given Rs per acre. The management also ed to supply fresh drinking water ell as irrigaion water and to begin development activities for the be- of the affected farmers. The man- ent also committed itself to putting d to the pollution and setting up a h plant for the treatment of spent-

e compensation received by the far- was hopelessly inadequate— damage to their land and health stretches much beyond five years. Drinking water is supplied for only two hours a day; during the summer months it reduces to a trickle. Short supply of water has led to fights and quarrels in an otherwise peaceful village. Irrigation water is not provided, neither have land development activities begun. The pollution, meanwhile, goes on unchecked.

The Chitali farmers' agitation has had an impact on other villages in Ahmednagar district. Similar problems of pollution and survival are forcing the villagers to unite for a long struggle. In October, '86 the Gramin Pradushan Jagriti Samiti (GPJS) organised another morcha and presented a memorandum to the distillery management. About 500 farmers participated. In August, '87, the GPJS went to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board headquarters at Bombay. It will also take the distilleries' management to court.

The GPJS members demand the appointment of a committee of concerned citizens, scientists, lawyers and government officials to assess the extent of environmental, health and financial damage in the affected areas; to investigate the long term effects of spentwash toxins on human beings and the ecosystem; to compensate and rehabilitate the victims; to put an end to further pollution; and to organise a national debate on the efficacy of the Environment Act, 1986, particularly in relation to the rural population.

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DEDICATED
TO
ALL THE OLD STUDENTS
OF
SHRI D M GUPTA

Preface

The present collection of Essays on Rabindranath Tagore has been brought out in honour of Shri D. M. Gupta, Retired Principal, D. S. College Aligarh on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday. Students, friends and admirers of Principal Gupta have made this modest attempt to express their appreciation for the distinguished work done by him in the field of education.

Born on January 24, 1912, Shri D. M. Gupta had his B. A. and M. A. (English) from Agra in 1933 and 1935 respectively. He had the distinction of being taught by Prof. Fielden who, leaving Agra College, later on joined the Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Shri D. M. Gupta began his professional career as a Lecturer in English at Agra College, Agra. In 1940 he joined Dharma Samaj College, Aligarh where he became the founding head of the Degree and Post-graduate Department of English. He was to a very great extent responsible, along with the then Principal Shri V. G. Jhingran and other colleagues, to raise funds to elevate D. S. Inter College to the status of a Degree and then to a Post-graduate College. He headed the Post-graduate Department of English for more than two decades and imparted to it a sound academic base. In recognition to his academic and administrative services he was appointed Principal D. S. College, Aligarh, consequent on the retirement of Shri V. G. Jhingran in 1966. Those who had the privilege of working with him during his tenure of Principalship, can easily recall with a sense of admiration and astonishment, the services that he had rendered to the college. He boldly eradicated indiscipline and other corrupt practices let loose in the College. D. S. College, Aligarh under his bold and shrewd leadership emerged as one of the premier Post-graduate colleges in North India. He retired as Principal in 1974.

Shri D. M. Gupta rendered valuable services to the Agra University in his capacity as Convener, Board of Studies in English and as Dean of Faculty of Arts for three years. He was one of the most effective Executive Councillors at Agra University from

1970 to 1973. Besides, Shri Gupta also fought for the cause of Agra University teachers and served as Secretary of the Agra University Teachers' Association for a number of years, then as Vice-President for six years and as President for two years. It goes to his credit that a new life was infused in the Teachers' Association. The direction shown to it under his inspiring leadership later on helped the Association with many a battle for teachers.

There are only a few educationists in Aligarh who have worked so assiduously and meticulously for the expansion of education in the region as Shri D. M. Gupta has. He is responsible for starting many educational institutions in the interiors of several Tehsils of Aligarh district as back as the late forties of this century. Schools and colleges at places like Raipur in Atrauli Tehsil and at Iglas, where he was born, owe their existence to the active association of Shri Gupta with these institutions. At Aligarh itself he is a life-trustee of the Hindu Girls' Education Society which runs many institutions, such as Raghubir Bal Mandir, T. R. Girls' Intermediate College and T. R. Girls' Post-graduate College. He is also responsible for the present academic status of the Champa Agarwal Girls' Inter College, Aligarh.

Shri D. M. Gupta is an author of several books of great interest and use for students. An organizer of great ability, Shri Gupta even at the age of seventy-five is as active as ever. He is associated with many academic bodies of Universities. His name figures in the Cyclopaedia of Educationists of India. While celebrating the 125th birth-anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Shri Gupta's students and admirers thought of bringing out a collection of essays written by eminent national and international scholars of Tagore as *Festscrift* in his honour.

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February 1987

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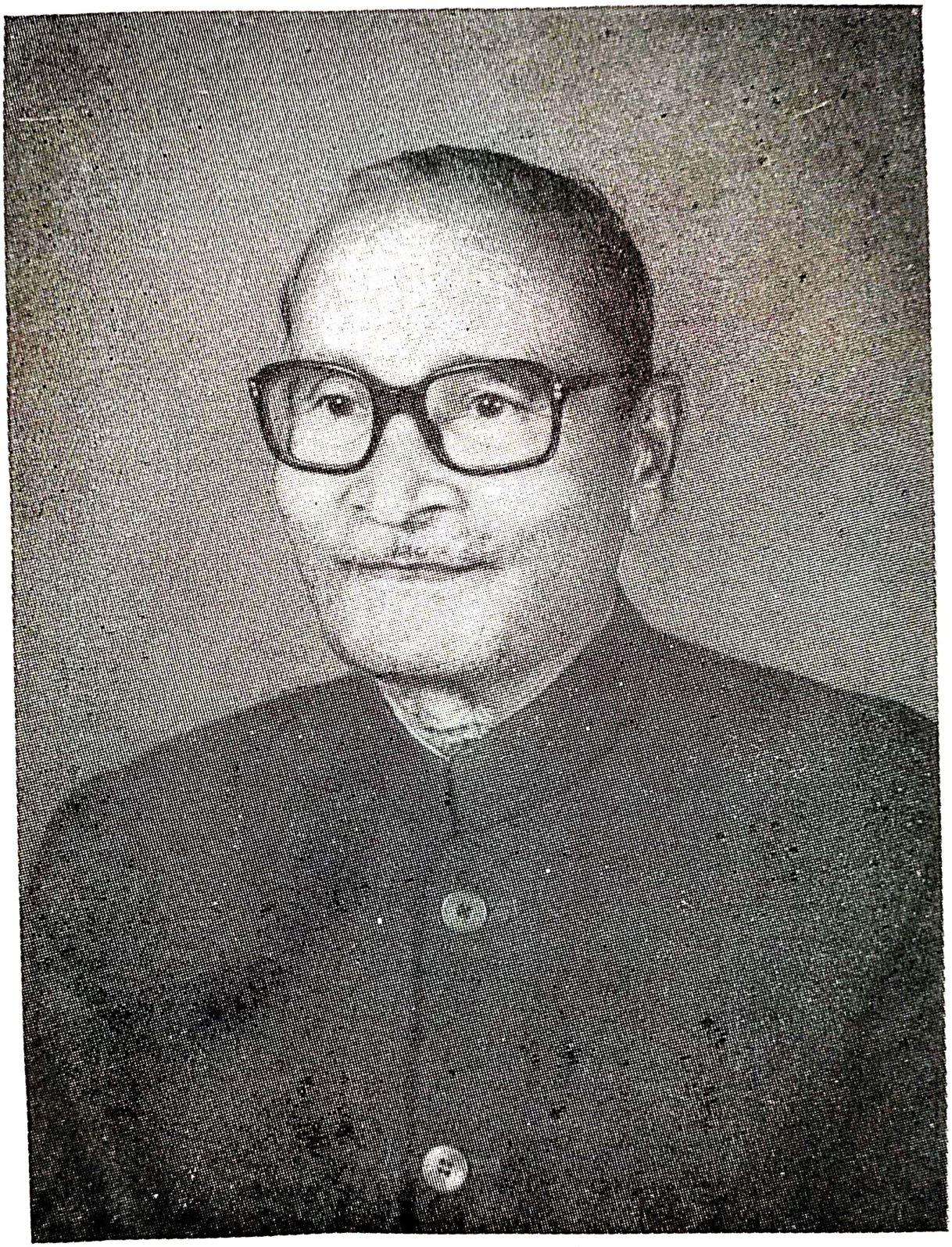
Editor



SHRI D M GUPTA
1987

Sisir Ghose

MYSTICISM AND LITERATURE

I do not know how to define literature. We think we know till someone asks. Mysticism has been variously defined and described. One of the simplest would be "a consciousness of the beyond, of an unseen over and above the seen." Another, equally good, comes from *Lights on the Path*, a theosophical text: "Desire that which is beyond you. Desire that which is within you. Desire that which is unattainable." The only thing to remember is that the beyond is also within, "the Beyond in our midst." There are powers within and behind of which we are not normally aware.

The passion for self-exceeding in our genes infests us with an incurable restlessness. Unless we touch the intangible, see the invisible, hear the inaudible, a sense of something missing haunts our lives. We become one-dimensional men, the curse and crime of our culture, a culture against man. Mysticism with its sense of wholeness and larger relationships, the larger reality of men is the only remedy. To keep away from its wider awareness can be good neither for life nor for the arts. At some point self-expression must know which self is being expressed. We all wear many-coloured coats. How does one distinguish the mystical, especially its 'innerness', from the ordinary or the waking consciousness? In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* William James had spoken of four marks of the mystical. Overuse has turned these into cliches, yet they are serviceable: ineffability, noesis, transience and passivity. The list is not complete, one could add a few more: such as timelessness, the sense of the holy, the unity of life and things, the real 'I' as other than the separative ego: Who is this I that is not always me? According to *Gulshan-i-Raz*, the word 'I'

belongs only to Allah. In one of his sonnets Sri Aurobindo says: 'No one I am, I who am all that is." By what art or science is this knowledge, for knowledge it is, acquired and what would be its imaginative consequences ? Is not the Mystery of Man the common pursuit of both consequence ? Is not the Mystery of Man, the Ascent of Life, the common pursuit of both ? But what is Man ? How long can literature avoid the question ? An amphibian, he lives in more than one world, "always on the margin." His body a mystery shop, all the worlds have their entry here, a cosmic correspondence, between the microcosm and the macrocosm. This wisdom of the body was not unknown to the ancient seers. *Kratur hridi antarhridayakasea,* the transcendental is in one's heart, say the Vedas. *Chhandogya* has explained beautifully: "In this body, the town of the spirit, there is a little house shaped like a lotus, and in that house a little space. There is as much in that little space as in the world. What lies in that space does not decay when the body decays, nor does it fall when the body falls. That space is the home of the spirit."

It is because we have strayed from that home, the inner space, that man is a wanderer for ever. Tagore spoke of a homesickness for a faraway horizon. Martin Heidegger, the philosopher of Being, has described poetry as a form of homecoming. Mysticism may be its other form. Could there not be a Family Reunion at some point ? 'May' may then be defined as a state or states of consciousness. The states divide as well as reveal. Between "I am a body" and "I have a body" lie light years of consciousness. To turn the prison-house (of the body) into a temple, is that not the common effort of poet and mystic alike ? Maybe in the alchemy of awareness the mystic has gone farther than the rest. Mysticism has deeper roots in the psyche than literature. Coeval with human nature at the point of its awakening—from my body into myself, as Plotinus put it—it may outlast and overcome literature. Is mysticism the beyonding of literature ? The roots of the mystical go back to pre-history, to the mythical, magical, and the metaphorical. It can move between the infra-rational and the supra-rational. Literature is but another common factor, may be slightly metaphysical, between mystical experience and a work of art could be that both Literature is but a sub-culture of the mystical. The imagination tends to the mystical, though the mystical is not imagined. Mysticism and literature meet because

both deal with the creative self of man and both need a special language. Another common factor, maybe slightly metaphysical, between mystical experience and a work of art could be that both are individual yet universal, universal yet self-transcendent. To relish as well as to release, is that not the supreme secret of both ? But many questions remain unsolved. What is the source and aim of their respective creativity ? Are the religious and the mystical one and the same ? Or do we live in discrete universes ? Is a work of art great just because it is mystical or tends towards the mystical ? Again, how does one periodize the timeless moment ? What would be the history of a consciousness beyond history ? What happens when, as a mystic poet tells us, "I have become what before Time I was ?" Who, where and what is this 'I' ?

How will the admission of mystical values effect our literary response and judgment ? No doubt some reputations will have to be reconsidered. Think of the later Tolstoy on Shakespeare and on himself. Plato, it has been said, had burned his plays after meeting Socrates. On being complimented for his 'poetry', Rumi had retorted: What have I to do with poetry ? Thanks to the mystical, a heavy shot of subjectivity may be expected. What, one wonders, would happen to western tragedy ? What would be the formal or literary criteria for judging mystical works and their authors ? Which is greater as poetry, the Vedas, Upanishads or Shrimad Bhagavatam ? Is Lao-tzu greater than Chuang-tzu, Ibn-al-Arabi greater than Rumi ? Plotinus than Meister Eckhart ? Tagore than Sri Aurobindo ? Shankara than Kabir ? And on what grounds ? Are *Piers the Plowman, Tintern Abbey, Adonais*, the prophetic Books of William Blake and Eliot's *Four Quartets* on the same wave-length ? How to answer these questions ? Those who do not admit problems may not offer solution. Purely literary critics can neither mark nor assess mystical values, somewhat as a chimpanzee cannot make out the thoughts of Spinoza or an Einstein. A qualitative leap, mystical values represent another realm in and out of this. The laws of the Unseen create the seen. A formless spirit becomes the soul of forms. A theory of imagination is a theory of the Invisible. A little brush with metaphysics is perhaps inevitable and may be salutary. Fortunately, all mystical phenomena are not obscure, complex and *outre*. There is a simpler, saner variety, an "everyday mysticism" which comes

our way sometime or the other. One morning an American housewife, Mrs. Prescott, saw no new thing, "but I saw all the usual things in a new miraculous light—of what I believe to be their true light. It was not that for a few moments I *imagined* all existence as beautiful, but that my vision was cleared to the truth so that I *saw* the actual loveliness that is always there, but which we rarely perceive. Once out of all the days of my life I have looked into the heart of reality; I have beheld the truth; I have seen life as it really is—ravishingly, ecstatically, madly beautiful, and filled to overflowing with a wild joy, and a value unspeakable. Just to be alive was a miracle. My very soul flowed out of me in a great joy."

Existence, Reality and Joy have become interchangeable, the great romantic discovery. The subject-object dichotomy dissolves into an absolute aesthetics: "All is in ourselves, ourselves in all", *ijantargatah*. Was this not Coleridge's hypothesis about the Primary Imagination? This had been anticipated by Henry Vaughan, who said: "Each bush and oak doth know I AM". Wordsworth saw its real presence "rolling through all things". It was Blake's symbolic imagination that helped him

> To see a world in a grain of sand
> And Heaven in a wild flower.
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And Eternity in an hour.

In the identity of self with things, "everything is everything else." Mysticism's repertoire of symbolism is a story by itself. When looking at a flight of swans across the horizon Sri Ramakrishna went into an immediate samadhi, the time taken to move from the objective to the subjective, from time to the timeless could not be measured by any chromometer. One'd with the One, we burst the bonds of sense and separation. The Idea of the Holy becomes a living experience.

Evidently Mysticism has more in common with Romanticism than with the Age of Reason. Evelyn Underhill called mysticism "the most romantic of adventures". Of course it is more than that. The Romantic, when he matures, becomes the Rishi, the seer of hidden truths. Raising negative capability to the nth degree, he activates a knowledge by identity, a power greater

than what is known as creative imagination. Such a person does not imagine; he 'realises'.

The limitations of reason are a commonplace of romantic criticism. In *Madness and Civilization* Foucault has shown how the eighteenth century had a way of unhinging its best minds. Of our own times R. D. Laing has said that it is sanity that we have to fear. The world is more mysterious than we know, than we can imagine. The connecting link is the Nature of the Mind. The romantics were more concerned with the Nature of the Mind than with Nature. Both mystic and romantic share a sense of the immanent and the beyond, sensitive to here and now as well as the beyond. Keats spoke not only of sensuous beauty but of the "principle of beauty in all things". The Platonic note was strong in Shelley, who wrote: "I am the eye of the Universe with which it beholds itself as divine". Wordsworth had his visionary glimpses that helped him to look into the life of things.

There are differences as well. Romantic writings remain more or less a literary mood and mode. Mysticism is the essence of religious experience. This cannot be claimed for romanticism, which is itself a substitute religion. Another difference might be that between the all-too-human and all-too-little-human, or between the sensuous and the non-sensuous. But this is perhaps only in appearance, for mysticism can be at once mundane and trans-mundane. The maturer forms of mystic can be at once mundane and trans-mundane. The mature forms of mysticism provide a bridge or ladder between different levels of being and seeing, may hint at transfiguration. Another point, not to be missed, is that the yogi and the mystic can be a greater lover than the aesthete. Only it is love of another kind, as the mediaeval poets, East and West, will show. St. Bernard could easily teach a few lessons to Walter Pater, shifting the focus from Mona Lisa to the Madonna. Which all-too-human love poetry can rival that of Mira Bai, the Alwar and the Vaishnava saints ? In her parting speech—"I am air and fire"—celebrating the elements, Cleopatra moves from the sensuous to the non-sensuous, from the material to the symbolical, from the mundane to the mystical. In that sublimation of consciousness are all her sins forgiven, and—moving from the vital to the psycho-vital—the secret of transformation laid bare.

When one thinks of Mysticism one thinks primarily of poetry.

And yet it would perhaps be easier to prepare an Oxford Book of Mystical Prose than an Oxford Book of Mystical Verse. Actually the stuff included under that title contains more verse than mysticism. From Traherne to Jefferies, and after, including our Krishnamurti, English prose has been particularly rich in Nature mysticism. How does the Nature Mystic look at the world ? For him the poetry of the earth is never dead. The neutralization of Nature is a myth. According to Jami, the Persian sufi, all things that exist are mirrors of God's perfection. The prose of the mystics may not be verse, but it is poetry.

Here is the confession of a Red Indian chief, enough to shame the civilized. Talking to the US authorities, who had usurped their ancestral land, the chief said: "Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming bird, is holy to the memory and experience of my people....All belong to the same family. ..The air is precious to all red men, for all things share the same breath. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not create the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself." Sensitive to the pre-logical cosmic consciousness, mysticism asserts the 'web', the totality of relationship in which man lives. An early vision had revealed to Tagore "the sudden expansion of consciousness in the supra-personal. The resonance of reality pours into the person aware of the All. Everything will pass away, said the Holy Prophet, except the radiance of His Face.

Listen to Traherne, who assumes all the beauty of the world, seen and unseen. "Our enjoyment of the world is never right till the Sea floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens....The sky were mine, and so were the sun and the moon, and all the world were mine, and I the only appreciator and enjoyer of it." That which enjoys is of course not the small 'I', but the Third Eye, the eye of the heart. Cleansing the doors of perception is a condition of visionary experience. In *Island* Aldous Huxley put the matter neatly: "Dualism...without it there can hardly be good literature. With it, there most certainly can be no good life." A nostalgia for the nunmious, the sacred 'supernature', is man's search for himself and the soul of things. Not 'I'–ness but 'Is'–ness is what widens and reconciles. This too has its own

passion, as in Jefferies and his utopian longing, a note not to be found in Traherne. Here is Jefferies, speaking of *The Story of my Heart*: "I prayed with the glowing clouds of the sunset and the soft light of the first star coming through the violet sky. That I might have the deepest soul-life till now unknown and utterly beyond my own conception. A great life—an entire civilization—lies just outside the pale of common thought. It is beyond or besides, all that has never been imagined." We pine for what is not. In a deeper view what is man but a psychic tourist on an impossible quest for the metaphysical city ? Is the city in or outside history ? Can literature be indifferent to the issue ?

Transcendence is the life of our life. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: "Life will be a desert, human life will be in vain, if he cannot know the beyond." Not a psychological illusion, mysticism alters the very colour of our being. The contemplatives, as the mystics are known in the West, alone know the secret of a change of consciousness. This change is the most crucial and creative thing about man. Has the problem of man and meaning, even freedom and justice, any other solution ? A norm of the future, mysticism's promise of a civilization of consciousness is still to be realised. In life and literature is there anything more moving, more poetic than the Bodhisattva's resoole to forego his personal salvation until everyone was saved ? Purely as a gesture, Marx must bow before the Buddha. Shelley outsoars Stalin. The unrealised dream is a finer criticism of life than the realised fact.

Today even front rank scientists seem to be coming round. Modern science is far less allergic to mysticism and its paradoxes. The New Critics of literature make much of the fact that the language of poetry is the language of paradox, without always knowing the reason why. The reason is known to the mystics. The union of opposities is the grammar of creation. Being and Nothing have to be seen together. Is also is-not. Our life is a hyphen between transience and transcendence. The smile on the face of the Buddha is the smile of his mother, Maya. Can anything equal the wisdom and serenity of the Taoist sage ? The real is empty, the empty real ? Not only are the walls of Paradise built with paradoxes, as Nicholas of Cusa had said, but also of modern physics. Recently a neuro-surgeon, Pribram, and an atomic physicist, Bohm, have started talking of a borderless paradigm bordering on the mystical. Einstein's statement is well known:

"The most beautiful and profound emotion that we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the power of true science." The union of the two sciences, the science of self and the science of things, might be the saving of modern history. When we are ready this might 'happen', in the deep silence the "mysterious event" may renew itself and all of us. The event can happen any time, anywhere. Here is how Krishnamurti describes a morning scene: "That morning, especially so early, the valley was extraordinarily quiet. The owl had stopped and there was no reply from its mate from the distant hills. No dog was barking and the village was not yet awake. In the east there was a glow, a promise, and the Southern Cross had not yet faded. There was not even a whisper among the leaves, and the earth itself seemed to have stopped in its rotation. You could feel the silence, touch it, smell it and it had that quality of penetration. It wasn't the silence outside in the hills, among the trees, that was still; you were of it. You and it were not two separate things. The division between noise and silence had no meaning. And those hills, dark, without a movement, were of it as you were. this silence was very active. It was not the negation of noise, and strangely that morning it had come through the window like some perfume, and with it came a sense. A feeling, of the absolute. As you looked out of the window, the distance between all things disappeared, and your eyes opened with the dawn and saw all things anew." In the silence the world is not destroyed but renewed. And here perhaps we reach the limits of language. Whereof one cannot speak, wrote Wittgenstein, one should be silent. If you would hear the Muses, you must prepare for hours of silence. Here is a little known gnostic text that takes us back to the blessed state of Not-Two, healing of the wounds of separation:

Dearly beloved !
Let us go toward Union.
And if we find the road
That leads to separation
We will destroy separation.
Let us go hand in hand,
Let it be our judge
And impart its seal upon our union.

Is this longing for union mysticism or literature ? Does it matter ? St. Francis addressing Brother Sun and Sister Moon, the Upanishad speaking of the lonely tree silhouetted against the silent sky, Kabir joining the swan on its noiseless flight to Manasarovar, breathe an ampler air, till, "destroying separation", "the distance between all things", on the wings of metaphor life turns into an endless epiphany. Literary flags are lowered, the trombones of trivia are not heard. Thanks to mysticism, we return to the source, the poetry of the self-one-in-all, the poetry of Being, of Existence.

When literature can bring us to this source or peak point, maybe it is no longer literature but something else. What know they of literature who only literature know ? The beyonding of literature is also literature's work. Tagore put it in his own way: "I dive into the ocean of forms hoping to gain the pearl of the formless." Diving down one might come upon the forms of things unknown. Maybe then literature as we have known it will move towards the supreme fiction, the pure absurd of the Absolute, the Maya of Advaita. In the process whether it commits suicide or resurrects on a new horizon, who shall tell ? To be concerned with such things is perhaps not to be wholly in time, the categories of sin, suffering and decay. A deep problem of personality development—"A single person who was himself and all"—lies here, a problem no self-conscious person can avoid for long.

The matter may be put simply. There are experiences larger than literature knows. In any case the highest literature—the Veda, the Bible, the Holy Quran, *Tao Te Ching*—is more than literature. The mystics have written great works without being men of literature. How was this possible ? Trans-literary rather than extra-literary, they have left records, monuments of their unaging intellect, that still tease. Emotion may not have been their sole concern, but these records are more, not less, than emotional. Think of the Buddha's vow under the Bodhi Tree, the Sermon on the Mount, Pascal's Memorial of 23rd November, 1654, Zen poetry, the Notebooks of Krishnamurti—can 'literature' ever hope to compare with their power, range and authority ? If we do not look upon these as literature that may be because these are quick with another energy, hard to analyze, a truth that we create from a deeper level of the being. When mystical works begin to be read as nothing but literature they may cease to be read at all. Eliot's fears about the Bible as literature were well-

founded. In any case the critical idiom or approach that could help us to approach and assess mystical works is wanting. Iqbal's point about Rumi has not been answered. Works of art—Kavya-shastra—may be looked upon as an embodied consciousness (pratima), an icon of the invisible. Criticism in terms of the containing consciousness is still to be formulated. Or should we not expect the intuitive and the interpretative mind to work together ? Where are the pioneers ?

A greater consciousness means a greater life. Mysticism's simple meta-aesthetics: *Thou art That* with its wider wingspread, and model of reality, is a pointer. Not only literature but life gains a new inward focus. Our growing sense of art and knowledge reveal possibilities in which the artist could think of himself as a work of art. Mysticism is the link language between man and God. Deification becomes the great, unfinished art of living. Lifting the veil of Appearances, in an endless amazement of Light, we touch Reality. We are back home. Only home is not a place, not even an idea, but an experience. "Nobody needs to go anywhere else. We are all, if only we knew it, already there."

Arun Kumar

RABINDRANATH TAGORE : THE GREAT SENTINEL

Rabindranath Tagore in his *Reminiscences* has described his childhood journeys to "a tumble-down building in an obscure Calcutta lane" where some people would meet and the proceedings of this association were "enshrouded in mystery". He says: "Our front door would be locked, the meeting room in darkness, the watchword a Vedic *mantra*, our talk in whispers. These alone provided us with enough of a thrill, and we wanted nothing more. Mere child as I was, I was also a member. We surrounded ourselves with such an atmosphere of pure frenzy that we always seemed to be soaring aloft on the wings of our enthusiasm. Of bashfulness, diffidence or fear we had none, our main object being to bask in the heat of our own fervour".[1] They had taken an oath never to rest till India was free again. One of his elder brothers, Jyotindra, was the sponsor of these strange meetings and Rajnarain Babu, the president, who "in spite of his hoary hair and beard...was as young as the youngest of us" and "was full of fire which flamed its fiercest in his patriotism, as though to burn to ashes the shortcomings and destitution of his country".[2] Tagore was a patriot and no wonder Mahatma Gandhi called him the "great sentinel" of India's honour and self-respect.

"The *Hindu Mela*", Rabindranath says, "was an annual affair" and "perhaps the first attempt at a reverential realisation of India as our motherland".[3] The most important features of this *Mela* were: the singing of songs which glorified the motherland, the recitation of poems of the love of country, the exhibition of arts and crafts and the encouragement of national talent and skill. This annual meet was national in its aim and inspiration and took place in Calcutta and its neighbourhood from 1867

onwards. When Tagore was seventeen he was sent to England, and the family expected, though vainly,that he would return as a barrister. He came back after about eighteen months and had decided himself to keep away from the Bar and the Civil Service.

Tagore's feeling for his own country was expressed in his writings when he was between twenty and thirty years of age. In 1891-92 he wrote several articles on socialism, where without expressing his preference for the idea he welcomed the tendency he had noticed in the west to resist exploitation and injustice in social relations, and also the objective of socialism, namely the reconciliation of freedom with social organization. In an article entitled "Britons and Indians" he saw the conflict between the two countries to be one of self-interest, a conflict which brings a blindness that cannot be overcome by nineteenth century culture. He even portrayed British Raj in India:

> More and more, the British look upon India as a long-tended milch cow in their own royal cattle-shed. They work to keep the shed clean and supply the fodder. They take good care to preserve this movable property and do not hesitate to rub the edge off the horns lest the animal should turn restive; they do not wholly deprive the skinny little calves of a little liquid when, morning and evening, the good cow is milked. But more and more clearly, their self-interest becomes patent.[4]

The Indian National Congress which was founded in 1885 held its first session in Calcutta and it was Rabindranath Tagore, a young man of twenty-five years of age, who sang before the delegates assembled from all over India an opening song which he had composed and set to tune in the folk form. Once again, a few years later, it was Tagore who sang the opening song: this time it was Bankimchandra Chatterji's *Vande Mataram* to which Tagore had given the music. It was a song which continued to be sung till his own *Jana-gana-mana* was adopted by free India as its national anthem. Once during a Calcutta session of the Congress, perhaps in 1892, there was an English dinner in honour of Congress leaders where Tagore was persuaded, against his will, to sing to the guests. He appeared in *dhoti* and *chaddar*, sang his song after which the party disintegrated. Some of the lines of the song deserve quoting:

> Do not ask me to sing, I pray you, do not ask me.
> Are we here just to make merry, to laugh and play,
> to say false and deceptive words ?
> Who will wake up today, and work, and wipe off our
> mother's shame,
> And offer at her feet the service of all our yearnings ?[5]

It was in the same spirit that at the Bengal provincial conference (1897) at Natore, he insisted that all speeches were made in Bengali, and when the then leaders pleaded inability, offered it, and did translate their speeches immediately.

In his "Topical Notes" (1898-99) he says: "Congress can entrench itself in the hearts of our people only if, with its own resources, it does lasting service to the country. If, on the contrary, it considers it its duty to wag its constitutional tail before a succession of masters in varying moods, it would get a crumb one day and kicks another, and finally meet with its fate in death by the roadside."[6] We should not forget that this was said nearly twenty-five years before Mahatma Gandhi tried to turn the national movement from its wordy ways.

Again it was in 1904-05 that he was declaring how "the weakness of a disarmed, impoverished and famishing India will be death of the British Empire", and addressed his people in the following manner:

> Truth can be apprehended in days of woe, and never in history has a people redeemed itself without such understanding. What we must do on our own cannot be secured by petitioning; what requires self-sacrifice can never be achieved by letting loose a spate of words; and Providence has prescribed us the grief so that we really understand.

On July 22, 1904, because of a proposal by the British Government for the partitioning of Bengal, Tagore gave a public lecture in Calcutta, *Swadeshi Samaj*, in which he spoke for the cultural integrity of Bengal and advocated a comprehensive programme for the reorganization of rural Bengal on the basis of self-help. He believed that our countrymen are mainly villagers and *melas* are a natural growth in our country. He says:

> If the leaders of the country will abjure empty politics,

> and make it their business to give new life and objective to these melas, putting their own heart into the work and bringing together the hearts of Hindu and Muslim, and then confer about the real wants of the people—schools, roads, water reservoirs, grazing commons and the like—then the country will soon awaken.[8]

He was also conscious of the fact that if the organizers "can return this current of festivity to the villages, they will reclaim the desert into which the heart of the nation is fast lapsing."[9]

Thus, in his presidential address to the Bengal provincial conference at Pabna (January, 1908) he recalled the exhilaration of the *Swadeshi* movement, the first great phase in India's struggle for freedom:

> ...Lord Curzon, appearing on the scene, tugged so hard at the curtain that what had remained hidden behind remained no longer under cover.
>
> The moment the ukase went forth that Bengal was to be split into two, one slogan, and one only, was heard from east to west—'we are Bengalis, we are one'. Had we ever before realised so vividly that Bengalis everywhere were near relations, that blood called to blood and had linked each to each in a consciousness of unity ? ...Like all true discoveries, this discovery of ours also appeared before us first of all as a temporary expedient for the achievement of a limited purpose. But at last we saw that it was so much more than a mere expedient. It came as a revelation of our strength, as a heap of treasure....
>
> This sudden realization of the strength that was in us gave our people the exhilaration of a magnificent self-confidence. For, without this exhilaration we could not have suffered unceasingly as we did over the boycott movement. Sheer indignation has never such powers of endurance; and specially, the wrath of the weak against the strong can never asssrt itself so valiantly.[10]

Tagore had deeply felt for his country and his people but the sight of impotent politics had injured him badly. He had started his school in Shantiniketan in 1901 and had turned to education

as another creative opportunity. He was of the view that a child is born with the God-given gift of taking delight in the world of nature but he is pestered with lessons which are pelted at him "like hail stones on flowers".[11] He believed that education should be such which enables every child to understand the purpose of the age and the task of our education should be to realize unity in spite of natural differences and to discover truth through the wilderness of their contradictions. But the *Swadeshi* movement was in his mind and during 1904-06 he was in the very thick of the national struggle, writing, speaking and even joining demonstrations.

Tagore continued his work of the movement till 1908, particularly in the field of education but his sensitive soul was increasingly revolted by the pettiness of politics and he again felt lonely. He could not endure the emergence of individual terrorism as a political weapon and found it to be against the tradition of India. He was also concerned of the indifference of the politicians towards the tasks of winning the heart of the Muslim, whom the British government was using all its power to keep away from the Hindu. In "The Good of the People" (1914), he said :

> The partition of Bengal did not hurt us materially; it wounded our feelings. And the hurt was indivisible just in so far as our heart was indivisible. The reason, however, why the Bengali Mussalman did not feel one with us in our grief is that we have never linked our heart with his.[12]

In 1908, Tagore withdrew from politics, and not only in Shantiniketan but also in his family estate tried to launch schemes of rural reconstruction on lines that he had thought out and learnt from the experience of agriculture and other field in different countries. This was his *Gitanjali* period, when he was looking inwards in search of peace and total understanding. He was, at the same time conscious that he belonged to this world and in 1911 wrote the song which is today our country's national anthem.

British government in India, after World War I, was afraid of the people's struggle and tried to repress it with all its might. Tagore reacted sharply and said in 1919: "To leave our young men and even our boys to the tender mercies of the secret police—what sort of a state policy is this ? It is like letting loose a herd

of buffaloes on fields of ripening corn, with the farmers lamenting their gate while the herdsmen grins at the prospect that not a single weed will be left on the land."[13] And after the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh he tried, though vainly, to get political leaders to do something about the incident. For this fine gesture, his people clasped the poet again to their hearts, as they had done in the *Swadeshi* days of more than a decade ago.

Gandhi had by this time appeared on the stage of Indian history, and Tagore was among the very first to call him *Mahatma.* In his turn Gandhi, always spoke of him as *Gurudev.* The poet, after his return from the west in 1921 found himself entered on a great controversy with Gandhi regarding the methods and presuppositions of the movement of non-violent non-cooperation. For Tagore, non-cooperation was negative and full of pitfalls. He said he believed in non-violence (*ahimsa*), but it had "to spring from the death of mind", and "when it concerns an immense multitude of men of different traditions and stages of culture, and when the object for which such repression is exercised needs a prolonged period of struggle, complex in character, I cannot think it possible of attainment."[14] Both, however, remained life-long friends in spite of their differences of opinion on certain major issues. It was the same Tagore who, in his speech on "Mahatma Gandhi" on October 2, 1937, said :

> Today no one need despair of the future of the country, for the unconquerable spirit that creates has already been released. Mahatma Gandhi has shown us a way which, if we follow, shall not only save ourselves but may also help other peoples to save themselves.
>
> He has shown the way how, without wholesale massacre, freedom may be won, There are doubtless but few amongst us who can rid our minds of a reliance on violence, who can really believe that victory may be ours without recourse to it. For even in the Mahabharata, not to speak of the "civilized" warfare of the modern age, we find *Dharmayuddha* to be full of violence and cruelty. Now it has been declared that it is for us to yield up life, not to kill, and yet we shall win ! A glorious message, indeed, not a counsel of strategy, not a means to a merely political end. In the course of unrighteous

> battle death means extinction; in the non-violent battle of righteousness something remains; after defeat victory, after death immortality. The Mahatma has realized this in his own life, and compels our belief in this truth.[15]

None has ever paid a greater tribute to Gandhi than Tagore did :

> He (Gandhi) stopped at the thresholds of the huts of the thousands of the dispossessed, dressed like one of their own. He spoke to them in their own language; here was living truth at last, not quotations from books. For this reason the 'Mahatma', the name given to him by the people of India is his real name. Who else has felt like him that all Indians are his own flesh and blood ? In direct contact with the truth, the crushed forces of the soul rise again; when love came to the door of India, that door was opened wide...At Gandhi's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as once before in earlier times, when Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow-feeling and compassion among all living creatures.[16]

Tagore and Gandhi, for the outside world, were two great personalities who represented the spiritual genius of India. Apart from their specific contributions in the area of literature and national service, both of them met on the common ground of a profound concern for humanity, and exemplified the great traditions of Indian thought. Gandhi too recognized Tagore not only as a poetic personality but also as a man of thought. He said: "In common with thousands of his countrymen I owe much to one who by his poetic genius and singular purity of life has raised India in the estimation of the world. Did he not harbour in Santi niketan the inmates of my Ashram who had preseded me from South Africa ? The other ties and memories are too sacred to bear mention in a public tribute."[17]

Tagore, however, believed that "*swaraj* is not a matter of a stick and a single string...Economists and educationalists and mechanical engineers must contribute their ideas and exertions...."[18] Rolland called Tagore's noble and beautiful words 'a poem of sunlight', but he felt that Gandhi was also right, for the demands of the present were 'imperious'. Gandhi's reply in

his weekly *Young India* (13 October, 1921), where he addressed India's 'Great Sentinel' was the magnificent opening out of a heart that bled, as never other has, for his stricken people. Tagore said farewell and it was not very long after the glory and despair that the non-cooperation struggle had been that Tagore wrote :

> And yet this void is no void,
> Sorrow's fiery vapours fill this sky;
> And alone, alone in that glow,
> In radiant song,
> I create the world of my dreams.[19]

Being what he was, Tagore could never entirely shed his loneliness and was always concerned for communion. In 1925, he was writing, powerfully as ever, pleading for a real 'striving for *swaraj*' :

> It is, I believe, essential that all over the country centres should be set up in which the responsibility for *swaraj* is accepted fully and not as a matter of homespun yarn alone. Health, recreation, the activities of the body and mind—thrown together into one combination, they make the picture complete.... We must have before us, in many parts of the country, examples of different types of revived life....The spread of cooperative self-determination in concrete form, with its resultant inward experience of glory and pride, would be a solid foundation for *swaraj*. Its absence, within and without, is the root cause of all our demands; denials of food and health, education and wisdom and joy. To think that *swaraj* could become a reality in spite of this poverty of spirit is absurd...[20]

Tagore's world university Visvabharati was inaugurated in the very year of non-cooperation in 1921, and was afterwards set up Shriniketan, in the fulfilment of a hope shared with Gandhi, that education should never be dragged out of the 'life-current of the people'. Tagore also went abroad to China, Japan, South America, South-East Asia, Canada and to Europe. He even flew to Iran and Iraq when he was more than seventy years of age. But everywhere he was concerned with the freedom of India.

In the year 1930, Tagore was abroad, speaking at Oxford on the "Religion of Man", having exhibitions of his paintings in Paris

and Berlin and Moscow, showing the world new and unsuspected facets of his artistic genius. However, his heart was sick as his correspondence of the period indicates. It was in a letter of 24 May, 1930 that he wrote :

> What I read in the papers about recent events at home reveals my country's new grandeur. The light of a great flame is on her face, and her whole aspect is illumined. The distance between us has shrunk and in the crucible of grief my mind merges with my country's being. No matter that I am away from India now ! Perhaps I can work for her better from a distance.[21]

In the same year he went to Russia and wrote back :

> We fear the roguery of the ruthless; even in that fear there is an element of respect. But we hate the roguery of the coward. The British Empire today is disgraced by our detestation. This hate will give us strength; we will win by virtue of this hate. Is only lately that I have left Russia. I have seen, rather clearly, how perilous is the road to our country's glory. In comparison with the suffering of Russia's martys, the police charging on us has been like the pelting of flowers. Tell the sons of our people that a lot remains to be done—and we shall escape none of that suffering. Let them not cry 'Enough !', for that would indeed be homage to the police *lathi*.[22]

It was none other than Tagore, not only the sentinel of India but of the world's conscience, who wrote to C. F. Andrews on 11 July, 1915 that Europe should not look upon Asia and Africa as "her legitimate fields for exploitation."[23] Ae again wrote to Britain's Royal Air Force when he had learnt (1932) of the bombing of villages near Baghdad: "If in an evil moment man's cruel history should spread its black wings to invade that realm of divine dreams with its cannibalistic greed and fratricidal ferocity, then God's curse will certainly descend upon us for that hideous desecration, and the last curtain will be rung down upon the world of man for whom God feels ashamed."[24]

In March 1934, John Anderson, then Governor of Bengal went on an official visit to Shantiniketan. The police had taken all the precautions. Tagore asked all the inmates to go to

Shriniketan which was three miles away from Shantiniketan and the British could only witness a deserted Shantiniketan. Again in the year 1938-40, he did not hesitate to hail Subhas Chandra Bose as the leader of his country. It was, thus, with real content of spirit that in 1940 the ailing poet laid the foundation-stone of Calcutta's 'Mahajati Sadan' which Subhas had planned, and gave on that occasion a beautiful speech.

Tagore wondered how imperialist greed had brought forth so ugly a transformation in the character of so great a race as the British. He said :

> In India the misfortune of being governed by a foreign race is daily brought home to us not only in the callous neglect of such minimum necessities of life as adequate provision for food, clothing, educational and medical facilities of the people, but in an even happier form in the way the people have been divided among themselves.[25]

He obviously had in mind the movement for partition of India, which fortunately he did not live to see, and which definitely had the support of imperialism. To the last, Tagore was conscious of the condition of the people and believed that freedom alone could relieve us. In one of his prose writings he answered a British Member of Parliament, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, who had asked him for some acknowledgement of India's debt to Britain's work in this country, and said :

> .. What have the British who have held tight the purse-strings of our nation for more than two centuries and exploited its resources, done for our people ? I look round and see famished bodies crying for bread. I have seen women in villages dig up mud for a few drops of drinking water, for wells are even more scarce in Indian villages than schools...I have seen our people perish of hunger and not even a cart-load of rice brought to their door from a neighbouring district.[26]

Tagore, who was at once a poet, a philosopher, a humanitarian and an educator, lives not only in the memory of the people of his country but also in the memory of the people of the world.

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Leila Roy

GITANJALI : RABINDRANATH'S IMMORTAL MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

> I know not how Thou singest my master ! I ever listen in silent amazement.
>
> The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of Thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of Thy music breaks through all obstacles and rushes on.[1]

The thoughts behind the above lines reveal a philosophy of life, which unfolds a new perspective for man, of present and of future. It holds that man's inner urge for love of God is vibrant in his appraisal of God's creation—the world and its humanity. This perspective gives a new vision, transforming trivial things in life into sources of infinite joy; and then, life appears to him as a thing of infinite bliss and illumination. Rabindranath's literary creations are, therefore, not only a rich store-house af unending joys, but the very contact with them elevates the human mind and gives a deeper meaning and purpose to life. Thus the longing for contact with God, the unbearable pain of separation, what he felt to be direct contact with Him and his own ecstasy in having been able to establish contact with his God, became the major theme of his poems of *Gitanjali* and that of his later poems, adding new significance to human life.

Consequently, the poems in *Gitanjali* indicate Rabindranath's constant effort to search for a perfect order of human existence. They are a mirror of the total significance of human life, revealing the poet's awareness of the 'Universal Personality', and man's

eternal link with Him. It is this faith in God, faith in the reality of perfection, faith in man's co-operation with the Eternal Spirit revealed in the poems, that strike responsive chords in our hearts. The poet's concern with the deepest values of life, his eagerness to "See things in the light of eternity," his effort to interpret the Infinite in terms of finite experience, his comprehensive view of the world, his emotional sensitiveness—all these endow his thoughts with a universal significance.

Considering human life as a process of continuous search for a better and higher existence, Rabindranath felt that the modern age has brought the whole world near to us, but it has really made it difficult for us to come in touch with man—his inner spirit. It has only produced a mechanised mental habit which has weakened man's spiritual apprehension of truth—the truth of a human being as the ultimate reality of existence. This human reality has, therefore, to be called forth from its obscure depth by man's faith in the Supreme. In the remote past, human reality was only a 'brutal reality' and man had to depend solely on it. In today's mechanised world, reality is an unending craving for money and materialistic desires. And all this may go on interminably, unless people are guided by some spiritual design of life which not only curbs them, but also transforms them into an "organic whole." For growth does not mean an enlargement which merely adds to the "dimensions of incompleteness." "Growth", in the words of Rabindranath, "is the movement of a whole towards a yet fuller wholeness."[2] This spiritual design is the gift of faith in the Ultimate Reality. And age after age man has heard the unceasing call of faith that whispers: "You are more than you appear to be, more than your circumstances seem to warrant. You are to attain the impossible, you are immortal."[3]

This immortal turth in its fullness is expressed through the lines of *Gitanjali*. They show that God is the Infinite ideal of perfection and human life—"the external process of the realisation of that ideal."[4] Thus, the Ultimate Reality in its perfection is nothing but the full realisation of the divine in humanity. This is the poet's religion which he preaches in *Gitanjali*: a declaration of universal religion. And true religion, in Swami Vivekananda's view, is nothing but manifestation of man's inner divinity. It asserts that God is not only, for each of us, but that God is also

present in each of us. This great world—an expression of the Infiinite—urges man to reveal the truth, to reveal the Infinite in himself. The poet also observes that the world which is God's creation "is ever claiming from us, in our own creations, co-operation with God, reminding us of our divine nature...that the ultimate truth in man is not in his intellect or his possessions, it is in his illumination of mind, in his extension of sympathy across all barriers of caste and colour; in his recognition of the world, not merely as a store-house of power, but as a habitation of man's spirit, with its eternal music of beauty and its inner light of divine presence."[5]

Rabindranath's quest for this ultimate realisation is evident in a greater intensity in *Gitanijali*, *Gitimalaya* and *Gitali.* In the earlier poems he had only thought and yearned for it, but in these poems he plunges into it as he strongly feels that in order to discover himself a deeply religious soul has to "discover the Ultimate Reality."[6] The poems in *Gitanjali* also express, to quote T. S. Eliot's words, "in perfect language some permanent human impluse."[7] Springing from the poet's intuitive experience and coloured with a vision, they appeal irresistibly to the deeper emotions of human spirit. They reveal the vital experiences of the poet's life and communicate to us how he had endured the grievous disasters and personal agonies courageously, transforming them into something "rich and strange, into something universal." "They discover, they explore, they realize new empyreans of the spirit"[8] that illumine the deepest realities of human life. At this stage they become a revelation, an 'incantation' that flashes out the inner reality: the hidden life of human soul in communion with the world of eternity. They are an "intense illumination...and supreme inevitable utterance...swelling up directly from the spirit,"[9] announcing the poet's immortal message to the perplexed and dissatisfied man of today: you are divine, you are immortal, search for your own identity imprinted in your soul within. This revelation of man's hidden life may always bring some "strange consolation" to the disturbed humanity and escort them through the diversities of life, and lead them to their ultimate goal.

It is this insight into reality which enabled Rabindranath to know that profoundity, where peace "reigns in the heart of turbulence." In the rapture of realisation, he quotes from the Upanishads in one of his "Naibedya" poems :

> Hearken to me, ye children of the Immortal, who dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven. I have known, from beyond darkness, the Supreme Person, shining with the radiance of the sun.[10]

In his utter joy he finds himself in harmony with the inner notes of existence, face to face with the Infinite, waiting for the "revelation that opens up the heart of all that there is."[11] This craving for the Infinite has a universal quality which emerges beautifully in *Gitanjali*. As this universalism easily touches the inner chords of human soul, it enables Rabindranath to convey his feelings to his own countrymen and to all educated people abroad.

In his rapturous mood the poet seems to utter the Upanishadic prayer: Aviravirmayedhi: Thou who art the spirit of manifestation, manifest thyself in me."[12] One feels as if Rabindranath hears the invisible voice from the other shore of life, which reminds him of his soul's eternity. And he joyfully sings :

> Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.[13]

It embodies that the Supreme is expressing Himself endlessly through the individual. This play of the Infinite trying to realize Himself in the finite is perpetual. Thus, human soul is inhabited by the Universal Spirit. Consequently, birth and death are a continuous process showing how man takes part in God's immortality. It is a significant utterance as it establishes the fact that whatever is filled again and again by Him shows the existence of the Infinite in the finite.

Rabindranath, in the process of his exploration, finds that a single principle is working throughout the world which gives it unity and harmony, even in the midst of outward conflicting forces. In this presence he discovers his God as an impersonal principle. His observations are summarised in the following lines :

> God is not away from us, nor in churches. He is within us. He pervades unperceived, life and death, pleasure and pain, sin and piety, union and separation. This earth itself is his eternal temple. This live, conscious,

> colossal temple is being recreated constantly in a variety of new shapes. There is nothing new in it, there is nothing old in it. There is nothing static in it, everything in it is in constant flux and yet its profound unity, its reality and its abiding character is never lost, because in this flitting diversity an abiding truth is manifest.[14]

The observation shows that reality, to the poet, is in constant flux and the all-pervading impersonal principle, which gives it unity, is constantly changing its form. This change is interrupted at intervals by a rhythm represented by birth and death, joy and sorrow, smiles and tears in the physical world of experience. Change from one to the other results in the destruction of one and the creation of another form. This demolition gives pain to man's mind and brings tears to his eyes. Still, the birth of a new one brings joy to his mind and makes him smile. In this rhythmic "dance-drama", life and death, pleasure and suffering, smiles and tears are the elemental parts of reality. But pervading all this there is a manifestation of a unique bliss which, to Rabindranath, is 'Ananda'—a profound feeling of 'intense exhilaration' and overflowing love. Such a picture of reality will invariably make people aware of the truth behind the worldly sufferings. It will also enable them to partake in their creator's cosmic play by joyfully accepting life as it is.

However, this mere knowledge of reality does not satisfy the poet, as he finds it to be a superficial approach—a contact at the 'door of a house'. So he craves for an intimate contact through love. Knowledge through emotional contact, to him, is real union, which is like an entry into the 'interior of the house'. In order to make this emotional contact possible, Rabindranath, endows his object of love with a personality, so that it is able to reciprocate the love of individual human beings. In this approach there is joy, as here the emotional urge also finds scope for self-expression. Moreover, it leads us to that world of freedom, where we reach truth, not through feeling it by our senses or knowing it by our reason, but through the union of perfect sympathy."[15] It is on this emotional level that the Supreme Principle is eager to establish personal contact with us. In this union Infinite is defined in humanity and comes close to him so as to need his love and co-operation.

In spite of his eagerness to establish an intimate emotional relationship with the Supreme, the poet is unable to see Him on a footing of absolute equality. He soon finds that it is his hesitation, born of a feeling of his own insignificance as compared to the Supreme Principle, which obstructs their union. This feeling is expressed in the following lines :

> I know thee as my God and stand apart—I do not know thee as my own and come closer...
>
> I stand not where thou comest down and ownest thyself as mine, there to clasp thee to my heart and take thee as my comrade.[16]

To come close to God, one has to get rid of this hesitation which mars their union. One should feel, like the poet, that if God needs his love, he is not born to play an insignificant part. It brings confidence in his own self and he feels that he is born to play a significant role. Out of joy, the poet sings :

> Thy love will find fulfilment in me,
> That is the reason why I have come to this world.[17]

Thus, to be conscious of the Suprume Being must be the aim of the whole of our life. We must feel the all-pervading energy in all our thoughts, feelings and actions. We should never think that Infinite is unattainable. If attainment signifies any kind of possession, then Infinite is unattainable. We must always bear in mind that the highest joy lies not in having but in getting, which may also be 'non-getting.' For in all deeper love "getting and non-getting" run parallel, which makes the yearning remain forever. Realisation of God through worship does not mean, in the words of Rabindranath, "the process of gradual acquisition of him, but the daily process of surrendering ourselves, removing all obstacles to union and extending our consciousness of him in devotion and service, in goodness and love."[18] Human soul has to struggle to go beyond all possessions, to realise that she is above it. Though through possessions we know that we are greater than the things we possess, it is a great misery to be kept tied up to things lesser than ourselves. The poet acknowledges this fact when he says: "The tragedy of human life consists in our

vain attempts to stretch the limit of things which can never become unlimited,—to reach the infinite by absurdly adding to the rungs of the ladder of the finite."[19] For it is over-much material desire which "at once puts out the light from the lamp it touches with its breath."[20] We must know that wordly desires are obstacles in the path of God-realisation. Hence, non-fulfilment of these desires is to be accepted as God's 'strong mercy'—His greatest gift to humanity. With this feeling the poet joyfully sings :

> Day by day thou art making me worthy of thy fully acceptance by refusing me ever and anon, saving me from perils of weak, uncertain desire.[21]

Total surrender of oneself to the Supreme Being is, therefore, the clue to human happiness. In a mood of complete resignation to his God, Rabindranath finds greatest consolation in leaving all his burdens on him, and wants all of us to follow the same path :

> Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret.[22]

Man's lasting happiness is not in getting anything for himself, but in giving himself up to something greater than himself—to those "ideas which are larger than his individual life, the idea of his country, of humanity, of God."[23] It would then be easier for him to part with all that he possesses, including his own life. This realisation will give him the greatest happiness of life: a deeper and wider relationship with the universe. This will open out to him the possibilities of a wider liberation in the realm of the Infinite. Then in his inner consciousness he will realise "the sense of his unity with his larger being, finding fulfilment in the dedicated life of an ever-progressive truth and ever-active love."[24]

Rabindranath also finds that when his awareness of the Infinite heightens, ordinary things of life look wonderful; but the moment he loses touch with his inner intensities, everything loses its importance :

> Away from the sight of thy face my heart knows no rest nor respite, and my work becomes an endless toil in a shoreless sea of toil.[25]

It shows that human heart is linked with the universe. It being the seat of his Lord, is distinct but also the observer and partaker of his play—the "Cosmic Lila". Having felt it intuitively, the Poet finds that his body and limbs are "thrilled with his touch who is beyond touch."[26] Sometimes in utter joy he feels the living touch of his Lord who is the "life of his life", who has his seat "in the inmost shrine" of his heart. At times, it comes to him as the revelation of a mystery which was very near and his own and like a musk-deer, "had blossomed in the depth" of his own heart. Sometimes in a mystical mood he rejects the idea of liberation and asserts the importance of his own identity as the cause and object of his Lord's love :

> O thou lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not ?[27]

And the devoted lover in the poet is self-assured of his God's love for him. He says: "If I call not thee in my prayers, if I keep not thee in my heart, thy love for me still waits for my love."[28] It is this self confidence which becomes the true basis of the poet's surrender to his Lord. But he also wants to be assured whether his Lord exists or not. So he says :

> The question and the cry 'Oh, where ?' melt into tears of a thousand streams and deluge the world with the flood of the assurance 'I am !'[29]

Thus, through the flood of tears comes an assurance from Almighty God—his protector, here 'I am !' It is the voice of the eternal 'I am' that speaks through the 'I am' that is in the individual. Here the individual 'I am' attains its perfect end as it realises its freedom of harmony in the infinite 'I am'. But to reach this end—the innermost shrine of his heart, the poet realises, he has to wonder through the outer world and feel that He is there.

But the long awaited union is delayed and the yearning intensifies, and the poet sings ;

> It is the pang of separation that spreads throughout the world and gives birth to shapes innumerable in the infinite sky.[30]

When the agony is unbearable, a pitiful cry comes from the depth of his unconsciousness :

> That I want thee, only thee—let my heart repeat without end. All desires that distract me, day and night, are false and empty to the core...'I want thee, only thee.'[31]

At this stage his pang of separation becomes so intensely impelling, that he sends out a pathetic appeal to his Lord to discover himself and thereby put an end to his unbearable suffering. So he sings out :

> Take me this time Oh Lord, take me,
> Do not return this time,
> Conquer my heart and stay there,
> I do not want back the days,
> That passed without you,
> Let them be dust unto dust.[32]

With a flash of light the agony of separation is terminated by the happy union with his God. The poet realises that the 'finite pole' of human existence has its place in the world of necessity; but in the Spiritual World men grow by losing themselves, by uniting themselves with the Eternal. This joy of union brings a flood of light, dispelling the shadows of darkness in the Poet's heart. In this ecstatic mood he joyfully sings :

> Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light !
>
> Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love;...[33]

Thus longing, waiting and realisation of the divine touch are the most dominant aspects of Rabindranath's spiritual experience. He shows how the longing and joyful partaking of immensity and closenesss of God make the Individual soul aware of His cosmic play. His enlightenment enables him to see man, nature and

God simultaneously, and thus, combining them to form "an integral vision of reality in the inner Shantiniketan of his heart."[34]

However, after a prolonged and agonising search, Rabindranath also realises that Supreme Principle being impersonal, it is no use looking for it in a particular point of space. Therefore, personal relationship with it is also not possible. Moreover, it is too vast for human beings to reach, so it would be the best thing to serve and love it in a form most closely manifest to us, that is, man in general. In this case, therefore, the object of service and love should also be mankind in general. This is what Rabindranath means by the realisation of humanity of God. With this inner understanding, he wants to meet Him in the multitude of humanity. He writes :

> Where thou art united with the multitude
> I seek union with thee.[35]

To Rabindranath man is the highest and profoundest of all categories of God's creations. He is made in the image of God and the interrelation between him and God is also inseparable and intimate. God also needs man as much as he needs God. Man being the centre of God's activity, God fulfills Himself and expresses His best through him only. It is the poet's religion of man, and he writes: "...the religion of man in which the infinite became defined in humanity and has come close to me so as to need my love and co-operation.[36] This is why Rabindranath lays stress not only on the 'divinity of man', but also on the 'humanity of God.' The guideline suggested by him for the individual to realise the union with the Infinite is a positive one. It is a method of joyful acceptance of life and a respect for life, by feeling God's glory and touch in nature and in all our activities. He, therefore, writes: "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight....No, I will never shut the doors of my senses...."[37]

To achive this union all our love should be directed towards the service and welfare of mankind, which is the most intimate manifestation of the Divinity. In serving others the urge for love is expanded indefinitely, and the self also spreads itself to get identified with the humanity at large. It is described by the poet

as a process of the "killing of selfish desire by making it spread." Thus, service to universal man is the best service to God. For in this role, man becomes a "Viswakarma, the World-Worker". He writes :

> In order to be united with Him, we have to divest our work of selfishness and become Viswakarma 'the world-worker', we must work for all. When I use the word 'for all', I do not mean for a countless number of individuals. All work that is good, however small in extent, is universal in character. Such work makes for realisation of a Viswakarma, the "world-worker", who works for all.[38]

With his love for this very world, he hears the call for service in the field of humanity at large. So the poet urges :

> Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense ! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained ? Meet him and stand by him, in toil and in sweat of thy brow.[39]

But even in this enlarged vision of service as indicated in the above lines, one can find a better choice of higher note: service to the suffering humanity, to the down-trodden and neglected. The underlying spirit is the same selflessness, but there is a greater satisfaction of being able to serve the needy. With this feeling of deep moral satisfaction the poet urges :

> He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil ![40]

Rabindranath values the growth of disinterested love so highly, because he feels that it helps man to find a purpose in life; it also gives him a direction which opens out immense possibilittes for

the expansion of self by establishing ties of love and friendship with others. This spiritual development through love helps man to reveal the best in him, besides giving him a personal satisfaction. And *Gitanjali* indicates the highest level to which humanity can evolve, revealing man as the image of God and that he is essentially a spiritual being. If it be so—man cannot eternally remain forgetful of his spiritual nature. One day he will surely find out his true self.

But modern man is a victim of various conflicting forces which stand in his way of discovering himself. His spiritual vision is often obscured or tend to be obscured by the complexities of the present day. On one hand, excessive technological developments multiply his physical needs and compel him to make ceaseless efforts to meet them. Failing which, he feels himself alienated, in the sense that he loses interest in himself and falls out of touch with other persons. On the other, he is pressurized by his committments towards his family, and others, and other problems of worldy life which he cannot ignore. Yet, so long as problems are there, they will inevitably press themselves for solutions. Fundamentally, human nature is the same always—whether in the modern times or in the past. Even now, as in the past, man, longs to serve others, faces the problems of suffering and death—of his own and of his near and dear ones; he also suffers from tyranny of mind. Although science and knowledge have placed immense power in the hands of man, he still gets knocks from circumstances and feels utterly helpless at times. The complexities of modern civilization have thus made man a much greater sufferer than were his forefathers. He is now more sensitive and the psychological probings of life are also much keener.

But if there is unbearable suffering, there are people with sympathetic hearts who are oppressed with sorrow at the news of human suffering. The news of the sufferings of famine-stricken people in Africa recently, has deeply moved the hearts of many people in different parts of the world. So we cannot say that people with sympathetic hearts are altogether absent today. The world has not become as bad as that. Even though selfishness, greed and avarice run rampant today, examples of unselfishness and self-sacrifice are not rare. Even those problems which seem

to defy any human solution, make people pray for 'Super-mundane' help. Although to seek divine help for mundane things is a crude form of prayer, it at least makes people aware of the Divine Power behind everything. Still there are some brave souls who are quite unselfish even in their prayers. They will not pray to God for any particular thing, but for the sake of love only. Such a brave soul is always moved by an irresistible impulse of love and devotion. They give him joy, solace and strength, and lift him up beyond the pettiness of sordid worldliness. Fortunately for the world, those who think of life and creation in terms of divine providence and plan, and act accordingly in the spirit of unselfish love and sympathy, are not uncommon even today, though not so abundant. And they will surely preserve the nectar of life when the earth seems to be nearly scorched with gross materialistic ideas.

Accordingly, Rabindranath's message of man's essential divinity holds value even in the present context. If technological advancements help in bringing about the Unity of the Material World which gives power, the realization of the Great Spiritual Unity of Man brings the entire human race together and gives strength of mind, peace and joy. The 'humanity of God' or the 'divinity of man' is thus the poet's spiritual mission to the disintegrating world of today, significantly communicated through the lines of *Gitanjali*. Through Rabindranath, therefore, India delivers her divine message to humanity: of man's inner divinity; and his unbroken kinship with the world of human existence realized in the spirit of sympathy. Clothen with the validity of a universal truth, this Divine ordinance conceived in the inner soul of the poet touches the heart to its uttermost depth; and the resonance of its sublime thought makes us utter in joy and amazement :

> Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.[41]

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Manorama B. Trikha

THE ESSENTIAL MUSIC IN TAGORE'S *GITANJALI*

> Rabindranath Tagore, like Chaucer's forerunners writes music for his words... —W. B. Yeats

Yeats discovered the secret of the ineffable delight of Tagore's *Gitanjali* in its music—something which he had initially experienced in the ancient western literature; but if one wishes to comprehend what goes in its making and what kind of music it is, one has to turn to its source that lies in the ancient Indian literature—Vedas aud Upanishads—as they are the fountain-head of this music which is beyond the personal intellect and attains its highest power from a super-intellectual energy, 'elan-vital' to use Bergson's words. *Gitanjali*, which means "songs offerings", partakes of this supreme inheritance and is a perfect fusion of poetry that is rhythmic self-expression, and religious emotion that is 'Sadhana', as Sri Aurobindo put it. This makes *Gitanjali* a complicated musical phenomenon in which the magic of rhythmic word brings home the spiritual experiences; if the former represents the truth of poetry, the latter stands for the truth of philosophy. Tagore has made it specific that such song comes into being only at the divine call or inspiration that endows the poet with unique attributes: he attains 'revealed seeing' that is associated with 'hearing' and leads to a 'visioned thinking.' This sort of totality in experience creates a new kind of rhythm in the life of the poet and he shares it with his reader through his song by the response of the rhythmic 'word'. Tagore elaborates this idea in the II song of *Gitanjali* :

> When thou commandest me to sing, it seems that

my heart would break with pride; and I look to thy face, and tears come to my eyes.

All that is harsh and dissonant in my life melts into one sweet harmony....

I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.* (p. 2)

Such singing is endowed with a serious purpose. It expresses the soul of man to himself and unfolds the greater knowledge of the world and God—which is attained essentially through senses :

Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim.

My world will light its hundred different lamps with thy flame and place them before the altar of thy temple.

No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight. (LXXIII, p. 49)

The wonderous mysteries of the world resounding with the divine note leave the poet spell-bound. The singer in him wishes to capture the same aesthetic, artistic powers and rules and grows restive to extract through his experiences the new rhythmic message of the word :

I know not how thou singest, my master ! I ever listen in silent amazement.

The light of thy music illumines the world. The life-breath of thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on.

My heart longs to join in thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice. I would speak, but speech breaks not into song, and I cry out baffled. Ah, thou hast made

*The text is quoted from Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*, (Madras: Macmillian India Ltd., 1985, edition). Hereafter song and page nos. are given along with the quotations.

> my heart captive in the endless meshes of thy music, my master ! (III, pp. 2-3)

He realizes the 'speech' is not 'song', as a song must have a musical setting to be adapted for singing. So, "The song I came to sing remains unsung" (XIII, p. 8). He tries to learn the art of creating music: "I have spent my days in stringing and unstringing my instrument" (XIII, p. 8).
Even his best effects yield little result because

> In thy world I have no work to do; my useless life can only break out in tunes without a purpose. (XV, pp. 9-10)

Apparently, Tagore defines here the nature of music he would like to produce; it is a music mingled with meaning, both together should create a new kind of music which is 'the essential music'—that conveys through the song the soul of the universe to him and the soul of the poet to his Creator. To attain his goal first he must acquire the art of handling the instrument, that is language, which would generate the "verbal music" if "the words have been rightly set" (XIII, p. 8). Then he must add to it "the music of thought" as his song is the song of "desires"—which are shaped by a definite purpose.

I

The relationship between language and music has been eternal since the beginning of the organization of the linguistic structures. Both express meanings and both effect the behaviour of the listener in terms of the emotinal and ethical and even spiritual personality—for instance, take the effect of the martial music or languid and dying harmonies. None-the-same, a vital difference between the two cannot be overlooked. Language has a specific reference to the features of the external world which can be defined with a reasonable clarity and precision. It is technically called "denotation" but it has a very powerful "emotional overtone" or "connotation" also that vary from individual to individual, from community to community and even from one time-reference to another. Music in its 'pure' form—when it is only melody, harmony or succession of harmonies—lacks the former as in the case of instrumental music, which is purely connotative but possesses the latter

characteristic in abundance. Tagore's poetry exhibits the greatest possibilities of both independently as well as in meaningful correspondences. It forms the epicentrum of *Gitanjali.*

In many songs Tagore's identification with the note of music is so intense that he becomes the instrument itself, and names himself the 'harp' which is Upanishad's description for man's created being. The music that flows from it is divine ,

> He it is who puts his enchantment upon these eyes and joyfully plays on the chords of my heart in varied cadence of pleasure and pain. (LXXII, p. 48)

and expresses itself through the rhythmic word. The poet does not want to create 'art-song' which grows out of the minted or adopted difficult poetic diction and metaphors which violate the sense of natural use of language. He has learnt through a close observation of his surroundings that nature creates directly. He wishes his song to follow the same course.

Hence,

> My song has put off her adornments. She has no pride of dress and decoration. Ornaments would mar our union; they would come between thee and me; their jingling would drown thy whispers.
>
> My poet's vanity dies in shame before thy sight. O master poet, I have sat down at thy feet. Only let me make my life simple and straight, like a flute of reed for thee to fill with music. (VII, pp. 4-5)

Once free from the false 'vanities' of a poet's art, he uses the existing poetic devices like alliteration, consonance, assonance and other sound patterns like rhyme, reverse-rhyme, para-rhyme to produce the desired effect. These conventional devices are employed so spontaneously that one feels their magic without feeling their presence. The repeated use of the simple structural patterns in language carry the weight of meaning. For example take the following lines :

> He came and sat by my side but I woke not. What a cursed sleep it was, O miserable me !

> He came when the night was still; he had his harp in his hands, and my dreams became resonant with its melodies. (XXVI, p. 15)

The line like 'he had his harp in his hands' echoes in the ears and hunt the mind through a single base 'note' which resounds in the whole instrument—'harp' and the poet, and creates that melting music which mingles with the dreams of the poet. Tagore takes into account both the inherent as well as the relational elements of sounds: the former means the individuality of the sound, for example 's' sound in "miss his sight" (XXVI, p. 15). These inherent distinctions in quality are the basis for the effect of what is called "musicality" or "euphony". For example consider the following instances :

> The night is nearly spent waiting for him in vain. (XLVII, p. 28) for the use of nazalised sound 'n'.

or

> ...I wish not to be called from my sleep by the clamorous choir of birds, by the riot of wind at the festival of morning light. (XLVII, p. 28) for 'k' sound representing the mixed noises of the morning birds.

or

"...The morning sea of silence broke into ripples of bird song" for 's' and 'l' sounds which create two kinds of music respectively of the bird and the waves but when combined into one create the music of the song.

or

"My companions laughed at me in scorn; and held their heads high and hurried on;" (XLVIII, p. 29) for 'm' and 'h' sound—the former creating the effect of self-effecting modesty of the poet which stands in contrast to the haughtiness of the ununderstanding ones. The relational distinctions, on the other hand, are those where the sounds become the basis of rhythm and meter, the pitch (higher or lower) and the duration of sounds (shorter or longer), the stress (stronger or weaker) and the frequency of occurrence (greater or smaller). The whole group of linguistic phenomena—which the Russians have called "orchestration"

(Instrumentovka)—create sound figures in Tagore's songs through various rhythmic units.

Tagore rejects the ideally regular or quasi-mathematical patterns of rhythm called 'Metre' and adopts the actual rhythm of language which is, to use R. Fowler's term "prose rhythm." In other words, the term rhythm in Tagore's *Gitanjali* (English Translation), includes individual speech rhythms with its wide variety that add music to his plain songs which are without periodicity. They are still rhythmical, melodious utternces of a devotional heart as the "prose rhythm" in Tagore approaches the regularity of verse; it has an inherent artistic quality which makes it different from the ordinary prose by a greater regularity of stress distribution. The poet's conscious effort is not to let it reach an apparent isochronism (that is, a regularity of time intervals between rhythmical accents). The general impression of regularity and periodicity is usually strengthened by syntactical devices like parallel clauses or antithetical balancing where the whole structure of meaning strongly supports the rhythmical patterns. To illustrate the point under discussion, consider the following lines :

> Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love. (LXXIII, p. 49) for the 'prose rhythm'.
>
> ... ...
>
> Day after day, O lord of my life, shall I stand before thee face to face. With folded hands, O lord of all worlds, shall I stand before thee face to face.
>
> Under thy great sky in solitude and silence, with humble heart shall I stand before thee face to face.
>
> In this laborious world of thine, tumultuous with toil and with struggle, among hurrying crowds shall I stand before thee face to face.
>
> And when my work shall be done in this world, O King of kings, alone and speechless shall I stand before thee face to face. (LXXVI, pp. 50-51) for the parallel structure.
>
> I know thee as my God and stand apart—I do not

> know thee as my own and come closer. I know thee as my father and bow before thy feet—I do not grasp thy hand as my friend's. (LXXVII, p. 51) for antithetical balancing.

The pitch-relationship which is the use of successive but different pitches with possible variations in length and intensity is the basis of articulation of speech; it has specific emotional meaning. In *Gitanjali* there is an unusually wide spread between high and low pitch in the songs. The scale ranges from the high-pitched "burst of song" (XXVII) to the "murmurings of a song" (LXXXIX) to "the twilight melodies" (XLIV) to "No more noisy, loud words from me...Henceforth I deal in whispers" (LXXXIX) to the music of silence :

> Let all my songs gather together their diverse strains into a single current and flow to a sea of silence in one salutation to thee. (CIII, p. 68)

To these sound-stratums, Tagore adds the varying cadences, that is intonation schemes of rising and falling tones into which his "voice took up the tunes" to which "his heart danced" as he put in song no. XCVII. The regular pattern of interrogation and exclamatory sentences impart a kind of melody that gives us the distinction between oratorial, conversational and melodic verse. For instance take the following lines :

> What a cursed sleep it was, O miserable me !
>
> ... ...
>
> Alas, why are my nights all thus lost ? Ah, why do I every miss his sight whose breath touches my sleep ?
> (XXNI, p. 15)

or

> Light, oh, where is the light ? Kindle it with the burning fire of desire !
>
> There is the lamp but never a flicker of a flame—is such thy fate, my heart ? Ah, death were better by far for thee ! (XXVII, p. 15)

Tagore combines these musical patterns with a type of rendition of the devotional folk-singer. It has been termed by Geoffrey

N. Leech as 'performance' of a particular recitation. He elaborates his point thus :

> Performance may be regarded as a particular choice from the aggregate of possible pronunciation in keeping with the normal rhythm of spoken English.

It means the reading aloud of a literary work of art is a performance, a realization of a pattern of music which adds something individual and personal; in doing so it may distort and even entirely ignore the patterns of music of a given language. In the songs of *Gitanjali* the principle of 'performance' works rather emphatically as the songs are meant for singing and are characterized by earnest emotional tones which govern his 'performance' and give them their essential meaning. No doubt, there are musical metrists like George R. Stewart who formulate that verse can exist without meaning but the theory does not go very far. Like many classic pieces of literature Tagore's *Gitanjali* has intricate emotional structures based on intuitive experiences, that add another kind of music to his utterances, i.e., music of thought.

II

Wandering through the "intricate lanes of the outer world" (XII) the seeker in the singer confronts himself and acquires what can be termed as 'self-knowledge'—after participating in the festival of the world, that leads to the 'world-knowledge.'

> I have had my invitation to this world's festival, and thus my life has been blessed. My eyes have seen and my ears have heard.
>
> It was my part at this feast to play upon my instrument, and I have done all I could. (XVI, p. 10)

The indistinct and implied messages conveyed through "the groaning of sky" (XXII), "the music of the nights" and make the poet say :

> 'Ah, I am a thirsty traveller.' I started up from my day-dreams and poured water from my jar on thy joined palms. The leaves resulted overhead; the cuckoo sang

> from the unseen dark, and perfume of *babla* flowers came from the bend of the road.
>
> ... ...
>
> The morning hour is late, the bird sings in weary notes, *neem* leaves rustle overhead and I sit and think and think. (LIV, p. 36)

The interaction between the poet and the world is established through a note of music which creates intense moments of unique emotional experiences. This rapturous give and take, a love-relationship between the poet and the world around him, fills his heart with a new kind of joyful music of pleasure and pain. Its total delight emanates from his love for the earth :

> Mother, it is no gain, thy bondage of finery, if it keep one shut off from the healthful dust of the earth, if it rob one of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life. (VIII, p. 5)

It gives him multiple desires that cause the moment of gloom and deprivation: "My desires are many and my cry is pitiful (XIV, p. 9). These traumatic experiences find full vent in many songs. The trailing notes of music carry the burden of thoughts and emotions :

> Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone ?
>
> ... ...
>
> I keep gazing on the far-away gloom of the sky, and my heart wanders wailing with the restless wind.
>
> (XVIII, p. 11)

or

> The waves have become clamorous, and upon the bank in the shady lane the yellow leaves flutter and fall.
>
> (XXI p. 13)

or

> A moment's flash of lightning drags down a deeper gloom on my sight, and my heart gropes for the path to where the music of the night calls me. (XXVII, p. 16)

So far as the songs of the poet manifest the self-knowledge and the world-knowledge there is in them a note of discord and clamour; but when the poet intuitively feels another presence their tone changes :

> Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes. (XLV, p. 27)

It awakens in him a new knowledge, i.e., God-knowledge: "Thou art the sky and thou art the rest as well" (LXVII). Now the whole world resounds with the music of "drum" and "conch-shells" in the welcome of the Lord, "the King of all kings." A new strain of music echoes in the world: "The morning sea of silence broke into ripples of bird songs; and the flowers were all merry by the road side" (XLVIII, p. 29). His inner delight gushes forth in a question :

> Is there no joy in the deep of your heart ? At every foot fall of yours, will not the harp of the road broke put in sweet music of pain ?

Every thing of the surroundings including the road reverberates with a note of delight and his existence attains a new mystical meaning; his only prayer is :

> Let him appear before my sight as the first of all lights and all forms. The first thrill of joy to my awakened soul, let it come from his glance. And let my return to myself be immediate return to him. (XLVII, pp, 28-29)

He shares the secret of God's creation: "why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on water, and why flowers are painted in tints...why there is music in leaves, and why waves send their chorus of voices to the heart of the listening earth." (LXII, p. 41). What Tagore experiences all around is "thine own eternal harmony" and participates in it :

> Thy world is weaving words in my mind and the joy is adding music to them. Thou givest thyself to me in love and then feelest thine own entire sweetness in me. (LXV, p. 44)

Thus, through the harp of the poet, God creates new melodies, and it is God only who is "folded in my final song"; (LXVI) hence, "all the strains of joy mingle in my last song" (LVIII). In the mood of sheer mirth that "knows not a word", the poet's song is characterized by a strong music that grows out of highly intuitive emotions and thoughts which are beyond the personal intelligence and impart him an intuitive speech. He succeeds in capturing through his vital intuitive feelings "the intimate light of the knowledge of spiritual reality", to use Sri Aurobindo's expression, of the "spotless and serene" as Tagore defined it.

Tagore's song undergoes a metamorphosis of the most subtle kind. If earlier, he was commissioned to sing his songs of experiences of the senses ornamented with the playful thoughts, now the new awareness "swallows up the intellectual tones into the closeness and identities of a supra-intellectual light and Ananda."[2] So the singer, who earlier sang and played on the harp, now dances to the note of "the essential music." For instance take the following songs :

> The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.
>
> ... ...
>
> I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.
>
> (LXIX, pp. 46-47)

In participating with the eternal, musical festival he can experience that life and death are manifestations of the same energy in a 'war-dance'; if the former is the beginning the latter is the beginning of the beginning.

> Keeping steps with that restless, rapid music, seasons come dancing and pass away—colours, tunes, and perfumes pour in endless cascades in the abounding joy that

scatters and gives up and dies every moment.
(LXX, p. 47)

The Creater and the poet—who is "thy severed self in myriad notes" or is "thy self-separation" only work together in the musical game of the world :

> The great pageant of thee and me has overspread the sky. With the tune of thee and me all the air is vibrant, and all ages pass with the hiding and seeking of thee and me. (LXXI, p. 48)

Still, he never forgets that "He it is who puts his enchantment upon these eyes and joyfully plays on the chords of my heart in varied cadence of pleasure and pain" (LXXII, p. 48). It is the He who "adds his loud voice to every word that I utter" (XXX, p. 17).

However, the resemblance of the poet with Him endows him with the power to create "a great soul rhythm" and gives him the "inner sight and hearing which takes no shape of the luminous word", as Sri Aurobindo put it. With this enlightened self, the poet hears a note of music in all the phases of time—morning, noon, evening and night, in all the seasons—spring, autumn and rains, at all the places from sea to the sky, in all the objects from the tiny flower to the boisterous stream before he hears in the silent beat at the heart of the universe—"the notes of for ever" (C). It changes the nature of music in the poet also :

> No more noisy, loud words from me—such is my master's will. Henceforth I deal in whispers. The speech of my heart will be carried on in murmurings of a song. (LXXXIX, p. 59)

He resolutely plans his last concert where the singer, the song and the life-spirit become one :

> Into the audience hall by the fathomless abyss where swells up the music of toneless strings I shall take this harp of my life.

> I shall tune it to the notes of for ever, and, when it has sobbed out its last utterance, lay down my silent harp at the feet of the silent. (C, p. 66)

Thus, in Tagore's songs the music of the "very spirit of feelings" is the source of the higher realizations :

> Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs. It was they who led me from door to door, and with them have I felt about me, searching and touching my world.
>
> It was my songs that taught me all the lessons I ever learnt; they showed me secret paths, they brought before my sight many a star on the horizon of my heart.
>
> They guided me all the day long to the mysteries of the country of pleasure and pain, and, at last, to what palace gate have they brought me in the evening at the end of my journey ? (CI, pp. 66-67)

Along with extremely rich sound-stratums of language are combined the diverse strains of music of intuitive thought, feeling and spirit that have at the centre "the fixed cadence." Therefore, the music which sustains the universe, creates in his songs "the melodies eternally new." Precisely, in Tagore "What sustains the lyrical spirit is the discovery and consistent following of some central cadence revealing the very spirit of the feeling and not at all the sole pursuit of its more outward movements and changes: these can only rightly come in as a modulation of the constant 'essential music',"[3] as Sri Aurobindo put in *The Future Poetry*. If in *Gitanjali* every song swells in melodies free as a wave even from his bondage of words, it is because Tagore has perceived the soul of God's creative expression—that is music, and has imbibed that 'essential music'—in his songs to salute 'thee'.

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TAGORE AND THE LOFTY 'I'

In *Gitanjali* Tagore discovers the truth that liberates man, and shows man to be a part of the all pervading self. This self is the Absolute self. The individual self lies inherent in this Absolute self. The individual self gets individuality because of the impurities. For the realisation of the self, the self should be free from all impurities. When the self is released from the impurities it means the individual is identified with the universal. The impurities are of time, place and person. This identification means that the universal and the individual have essentially the same nature.

The Absolute self wills to know itself and for that it duplicates itself or projects itself. The self has consciousness as its nature. In the Absolute the self and consciousness are living in perfect harmony. But this unity has to be dissolved for the possibility of the knowledge of the self. The subject projects itself in the object and seeks to know itself in this object. Tagore expresses this idea in the following words :

> My poet, is it thy delight to see thy creation through my eyes and to stand at the portals of my ears silently to listen to thine own eternal harmony ?[1]

The poet knows why he has been created. He knows that the Absolute self has divided itself to know its self :

> Thou seetest a barrier in thine own being and then callest thy severed self in myriad notes. This thy self-separation has taken body in me.[2]

According to *Saiva* Voluntarism (*Svatantryavada*) the Absolute

self manifests all from itself, in itself and by itself. All that the world of experience constitutes of is the manifestation of the Absolute self. There is multiplicity in the unity of the Absolute. This multiplicity is latent in the self. But when the Absolute self wants to know itself, it creates the phenomenal, physical world. By his power of self-limitation, that which is one becomes multi-form. The all powerful, all inclusive, hides itself because it desires to seek itself :

> Where dost thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadows ?[3]

The poet knows that he has to come again and again in this world with the limitations of time and space, because the Lord wants him to come in this form. In every form of the individual self, the Absolute lies hidden. All limited subjects are nothing but limitations of the absolute self-consciousness. The subject exists alone, objects are the limitations of the subject :

> Through birth and death, in this world or in others, wherever thou leadest me it is thou, the same, one companion of my endless life....[4]

The Absolute self limits itself so that the world of particulars may appear. All activity in this world is the eternal I's seeking itself, to get a reunification by removing this primary splitting :

> Hidden in the heart of things thou art nourishing seeds into sprouts, buds into bloosoms, and ripening flowers into fruitfulness.[5]

Tagore knows that the individual self is made a prisoner by the master that is the Absolute self: "'Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you ?' 'It was my master.'"[6] Once in this prison, the prisoner builds his own chains that hold him firmly in this world: "I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain....When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip."[7]

The poet knows his physical attachments are not greater than his attachment to the Absolute self. Although they try to hold

him "But it is otherwise with thy love which is greater than theirs, and thou keepest me free".[8] These chains are the spatio-temporal limits of the poet "who knows when the chains will be off."

The wordly physical I's "build their houses with sand and they play with empty shells".[9] These empty shells are limited physical selves that parts of Absolute eternal I's. They treat this world as real and treat this as their home.

In the maze of this physical world, the individual self forgets its real self and "I take pride in this great wall, and I plaster it with dust and sand" and because of all this decoration "I lose sight of my true being." But the Real self that is lost in the world of shadows, is craving to come out: "He whom I enclose with my name is weeping in this dungeon....I lose sight of my true being in its dark shadow."[10]

Now the poet realizes that "All desires that distract me, day and night, are false and empty to the core."[11] He wants to get rid of his individual self, so that "I may feel thee on everyside, and come to thee in everything... Let only that little be left of me whereby I may never hide thee."[12]

Tagore says that the worldly ways of worship will not help him—"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads !" He will not find God in the "lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut ?"[13]

In this world God can be found in performing the worldly tasks: "He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones."[14] Tagore knows "The stream has its everyday work to do and hastens through fields and hamlets;" but the incessant desire of the stream is to move "towards washing of thy feet."[15] So would he always "run back to thee undiminished." But he knows he has to play upon his body, his "instrument."[16] The physical existence he makes an instrument for his realization of the self. He does not treat the physical body as an hindrance. "No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delight of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight."[17] He wants to leave this physical self only "when my work shall be done in this world".[18]

The wordly 'I' or the individual self considers the eternal 'I' or the Absolute self to be "my only friend, my best beloved."[19] He knows that this friend, this self is not from this world. It belongs

to the "dim shore of the ink-black river,...far edge of the frowning forest, through what mazy depth of gloom art thou threading thy course to me, my friend."[20]

The poet can see that the desires of his physical I "are many."[21] He also knows that he "languidly lingers"[22] to his worldly I. But often he feels some presence within himself, "I know not what this is that stirs in me—I know not its meaning."[23] Then "I awaken and hurry in search of my goal."[24] The path of the attainment of the Absolute self is not easy. "The traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end."[25] On his way "Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens."[26] But even in his moments of despair he knows "The morning will surely come, the darkness will vanish, and thy voice pour down in golden streams breaking through the sky."[27] Meanwhile, he can keep still and wait with "head bent low with patience."[28]

Then one day "the lotus bloomed." And he "felt a sweet trace of a strange fragrance in the south wind."[29] And then he knew that the moment of realization was near.

Now the poet knows "that of a sudden the happy moment will arrive."[30] He can hear the "silent steps."[31] He feels in "the air a faint smell of thy sweet presence."[32] It seems that the time has come for the individual self to "wind up"[33] its work. The poet advises others also, "Oh friends, leave the way open to him—forbid him not."[34]

Now the individual self is getting released from its impurities. It is discovering that it has essentially the same nature as the eternal universal self. It is moving towards all blissful, pure awareness. The individual 'I' knows it is now moving towards the Absolute eternal 'I', that is essential being. He knows this unification with the Absolute to be the "return to myself."[35] But the individual self is still held by its physical limitations. The Lord gives him a sword "to cut asunder my bonds"[36] and as soon as the impurities of the physical self are cut off, the whole phenomenal world melts away like bubbles into an ocean of blissful awareness. He is released from his limitations: "I have got my leave."[27]

He leaves this worldly I, like a bride "After the wedding the bride shall leave her home and meet her lord alone in the solitude

of night."[38] He goes back to the pre-existent harmony with the eternal 'I', "that lost sweet touch in the allness of the universe."[39]

This realisation is the realisation of the self, the self taken not as a limited narrow empirical ego but as the ultimate unbounded consciousness, when there is full participation of the subject within the aesthetic object. The individual consciousness finds its identity within the large whole of the universal consciousness. The concept is fundamental to *Saiva* metaphysics. "The intimate essence of consciousness or the 'I' according to the Saiva, is beatitude. The absence of beatitude and suffering are due to a need, privation or desire for something separate from the self. Beatitude is the absence of this desire, for resting in oneself to the exclusion of everything else. The 'I' contains all things, everything that exists arises from its unconfined liberty. It cannot be the seat of any deprivation and can desire nothing but itself."[40] For such a realisation ell effective and mental barriers are resolved and the object is perceived with an exemplary single mindedness. This means an enlarging of the soul whereupon the perceiver sees the world in all its beauty, nothing is seen outside the Divine Scheme. "Seasons come dancing and pass away—colours, tunes, and perfumes pour in endless cascades in the abounding joy."[41] Poet is delighted at his identification with the Absolute self—"My whole body and my limbs have thrilled with his touch who is beyond touch."[42] Poet feels that "the inscrutable without name and form had taken me in its arms in the form of my own mother."[43]

Every object in this world represents the manifold forms of the Absolute. Every individual is a part of that Absolute. Poet knows that the individual is one with other individuals, as they are all of the Absolute One, the eternal I. "The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world."[44]

The poet wants his individuality to merge into the individuality of other individuals and through its unification with other limited selves, he wants to achieve unification with the Absolute self. He wants his light "to join the carnival of lamps."[45] And here "the barrier of the moments break."[46] He understands the futility of his physical desires "Things that I longed for in vain and things that I got—let them pass."[47]

Now the poet desires to go back to its "eternal home" that

is the eternal I. From this eternal I every individual I rises and goes back to it "like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests .."[48]

Tagore clearly believed that in every man there are two 'Is'. One is "petty, individual, the prisoner of his environment", and the other is "lofty, universal, joined with the boundless infinity." All through his life he struggled to be released from the individual self, which is an obstacle in the contact with the sublime self. He wanted "to crush that pettier self; to let the lofty 'I' grow in power and place it firmly on the throne, ere I complete this earthly pilgrimage."[49]

Tagore's "lofty I" is similar to Coleridge's eternal I AM. In the Scheluim to Thesis VI Coleridge gives the difference between the Individual self and the Absolute self. He says man is a mortal being and his existence is not eternal. Hence he cannot say 'I am because I am'. Man is mortal and such a statement is not true for him. His existence is not eternal and can come to an end. But God can say about the basis of his existence that 'I am because I am'. He is immortal and eternal and his existence cannot come to an end. Coleridge says man must "separate 'I' from Me as far as he possibly can, and remove Me till it is almost lost in the remote distance."[50] Me is the finite I, the empirical impure self, and 'I' is the pure, absolute, eternal self. The individual self can be in a position to say 'I am I' when by a process of abstraction "Me is lost." At the end of Thesis IV he says "we begin, with the I KNOW MYSELF, in order to end with the absolute IAM. We proceed from the SELF, in order to lose and find all self in God." And he who achieves the state of pure self-consciousness. That is he achieves the state of pure self-consciousness. This is the state that Tagore has reached. He has transcended his individual 'I' and has reached the "Lofty I".

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THE STRUCTURE OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S *GITANJALI*

Though every 'poem' in Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* can be regarded as an independent piece with its own theme and persona, yet when all these poems are read as parts of one whole, one realizes that they tell the tale of a person's life from the womb to his death. In other words, the poems included in the book have an internal unity. In the opening poem of the book a child is expected to be born. Then this female child successively attains youth, falls in love, succeeds in meeting him after waiting for him for a long time, becomes a parent and enjoys her motherly responsibilities, broods over metaphysical questions and is visited, towards the end of the book, by the thoughts of death. Thus here we have a treatment of the major incidents which occur in human life and the feelings which visit a person at the chief stages in life, the main emphasis being on the treatment of love. If we group the poems stage-wise, we shall get the following table :

	Incident/Stage	*Poems in which it is treated*
1.	The expectation of the birth of a child is announced	1
2.	The child starts the journey of life and spends the days of childhood	8, 12-15
3.	She is in love and waits for him to come	17-47
4.	He comes to her	48-59
5.	She becomes a mother	60-62
6.	She broods over metaphysical questions	63-67, 69, 71-72, 76-77, 84
7.	She prepares herself to reach the end of the journey	86-103

In the opening poem of the book, the birth of a child has been described in terms of the birth of a song. The persona of the poem described as a composer of songs is a mother who is giving thanks for the conception she has been blessed with. The fact that it is a child's birth that is being described in terms of the birth of a song becomes evident from the seventh and eighth poems in which this has been done explicitly: in the seventh poem the word 'she' has been used for the song when the poet writes: "My song has put off her ornaments. She has no pride of dress and decoration."[1] Dress and decoration are needed for a person and the fact evidences that song and child have been identified with each other. If we ignore the suggested meaning and pay attention to only the literal meaning of the poem, we find that the persona here is either a singer who is thanking somebody who blesses him with songs which he sings, or the musical instrument which is thanking the singer for singing his songs through it. But we know that in poetry more is meant than meets the eye and when we try to find out what the poet's real meaning is, we come to the conclusion that the persona in the poem is a woman who expects to become a mother. V. Rama Murthy, while trying to interpret the poem, asserts that the poet is praising God for renewing life in the world and for having enriched it with a large number of gifts.[2] If we accept his interpretation, we shall have to accept that the world itself is the persona in the poem and the poet considers himself world-like in receiving songs from the Supreme Being and singing them. But a book ending with the talk of a person's death and beginning with the hope of birth is beginning with the birth of that very person. That is why one has to accept that the persona in this poem is a woman who is thanking the Supreme Being for the hope she has been blessed with.

M. V. Rama Murthy finds "the theory of reincarnation of souls after death" implied in the clause, "This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again" which occurs in the opening poem of the book.[3] But this interpretation is untenable in the light of the fact that the soul is not a container but the contained and so it cannot be described as a vessel which can be filled and emptied again. The soul enters a body, dwells in it so long as it is usable and leaves it to dwell in another when it finds the former one no longer usable.[4] So the image of a vessel cannot be regarded as one used for the soul. The image can be used for something which

is used as a vessel. A flute can be likened to a vessel, no doubt, and so can be the human body. The soul resembles a dweller and the body resembles a house. The fact is that Tagore is saying nothing about the behaviour of the soul in this poem. If he had faith in the belief that the soul transmigrates from one body into another, he would have, at least, referred to it in the death-poems which occur towards the end of the book [see *infra*]. The fact evidences that Tagore is not talking about what happens to a person's soul after his/her death.

The explicit description of the days of childhood comes in the 8th poem in which the child refuses to put on finery and to be "shut off from the healthful dust of the earth" (*Gitanjali*, p. 5). Here the child is intelligent enough to try to persuade her mother to keep her free from the bondage of jewelled chains. It means now the child has started having well-thought out ideas and has acquired the ability to state them convincingly.

In the 12th poem the persona says that her journey will take a long time and the way is long (*Gitanjali*, p. 7). It means the protagonist has become aware of what life is and what one hopes to achieve in life. And with this awareness she begins her quest for the master. It is very common in India to describe life as a journey. Since the journey has been described as long, it is evident that the persona is not far away from the starting point.

Then there follow some poems in which the persona appears as a pupil learning the art of singing from the master. Such poems are the 13th and the 15th. In the 13th poem the persona says that she has spent her life in stringing and unstringing her musical instrument and the song she had come to sing remains unsung even now. In the 15th poem she has begun to feel that she has acquired the skill of singing and requests the master to command him to sing and, thus, give her an opportunity to show how good a singer she is.

When in the 17th poem the protagonist begins to talk of the lover, of ignoring laws and codes, she has attained youth. From the 17th to the 47th poem we find embodied various desires and fears of a beloved who is waiting for the lover to come. As a beloved is visited by various kinds of hopes and fears, so is this persona. In some poem she describes herself as a girl with a basket full of flowers waiting for the lover to come, in another she

is waiting for him at her residence, and in yet another she waits for him throughout the night.

He comes to her in the 48th poem and she finds him standing before her with a smile on his face. In the poems from 47 to 54 we have descriptions of his arrival and she gives voice to various throbbings of her heart. His appearance and behaviour have been described in poems from 54 to 59. The beloved's joy finds especial expression in poems numbering fifty-six and fifty-seven. In the 56th poem the beloved says that in her life his will is taking shape and in her heart is the endless play of his delight. In the 57th poem she exclaims: "Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light !" and expresses her joy at the meeting. Here she talks of wild wind, laughter, butterflies, lilies and jasmines. All that she says here is the overflow of her joy as butterflies, lilies and jasmines are the symbols of beauty and joy.

If we regard every poem of the book as an independent piece and ignore the fact that they are the overflows of one person's powerful feelings at several stages of life, we shall not be able to explain why in one poem Tagore writes about light, in another about joy and in the third about love. V. Rama Murthy regards these poems as independent pieces with the result that while commenting on the poems 56, 57 and 58 he says that the poet praises love in poem number 56, light in 57 and joy in 58.[5] He is not able to answer why the poet praises love in one poem, light in another and joy in the third. The fact is that it is the meeting of the beloved and the lover which has brought the light of joy to the beloved and so the words 'light' 'joy' and 'love' have bocome synonymous for her and in poem number 59 she says explicitly that it is his love which has become "golden light" (*Gitanjali*, p. 39). That makes it evident that the poet is describing the meeting of the beloved and the lover in the poems from 56 to 59 and is giving voice to her mirth.

Immediately after this in the 60th poem the poet comes to give an account of children's pastime of building houses with sand and playing with empty shells. The fact signifies that the child born in the opening part of the book has become a mother. The fact that in the 61st poem the poet writes about a baby's sleeping, signifies that this mother is taking care of her child who is smiling while sleeping and whose limbs are sweet, soft and fresh.

In poem number 62 the child plays with coloured toys, dances, gets sweet things from the mother and smiles when the mother kisses him/her.

Then come the poems in which the mother talks of the pleasures and the responsibilities of the family-life. This evidences that the woman is now engaged in her household responsibilities and has ascended one more step. In the 63rd poem she has become known to new friends and has been able to get seats in other persons' homes. In the 64th poem she finds women lighting lamps in the sky where they will serve no purpose at all but not helping her in removing the darkness of her house. In the 65th and the 66th poems she tries to please the Supreme Being.

In a number of poems following the 66th, she broods over the problem as to what relationship prevails between the Supreme Being and the universe. In some she embodies the view that the world is not separate from the Supreme Being and that whatever can be perceived in the universe is the manifestation of none else than the Supreme Being Himself.[6] Such poems are the 57th, 69th, 71st and 72nd. Since she has started thinking about metaphysical problems, it is evident that she has outlived the passions of her youth and has attained maturity at least in this respect. However, in the 67th and the 77th poems she regards the Supreme Being as somebody other than herself. It means in these poems she has became a dualist. A non-dualist cannot say : "I know thee as my God and stand apart—I do not know thee as my own and come closer" (*Gitanjali*, p. 51), and one who regards the Supreme Being as different from oneself is a dualist. But in the 84th poems she again speaks like a non-dualist when she says that separation has given birth to innumerable shapes in the infinite sky. This reminds one of the Vedantic view that at the time of creating the universe the Supreme Being desired to become many and, then, became that.[7]

With the 68th poem begin her reflections on death and she tries to explain to herself that death be not regarded as something unwelcome. In the 86th poem she welcomes Death's servant, in the 89th poem she is not able to sing loudly and can only murmur. The fact signifies that she has become quite aged and has reached quite close to her death. In the 90th poem she promises to place before death" all the earnings and

gleanings of [her] busy life" (*Gitanjali*, p. 60). She describes death in terms of marriage in poem number 91. She knows what she will lose with death but the fact does not disturb her—this view finds embodiment in poem number 92. In the 93rd poem she bids farewell to her neighbours and in the 94th to her friends. In the 95th poem she explains why she is not afraid of death : she hopes to be taken proper care of in the world hereafter as she has been in this world where she came as a stranger.

The fact that the poems of *Gitanjali* have a unity has been accepted by V. Rama Murthy who asserts that "a sustained emotional identification" is responsible for the unity of the poems included in it.[3] But Rama Murthy does not say that the incidents and stages from conception to death have been included in it and that they have been described chronologically.

REFERENCES

1. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (Madras : Macmillan, 1979 [1913], pp. 4-5.
2. *Tagore's Gitanjali : A Commentary* (Delhi : Doaba House, 1972), p. 19.
3. Ibid. p. 20.
4. Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Gita* (II, 22) :
   Vasansi jeernani yatha vihaya navani grihnati naroparani,
   tatha sharirani vihaya jeernanyanyani sanyati navani dehi.
   (As a man, casting off worn-out garments, puts on others, so the dweller in the body leaves a worn-out body and enters a new one).
5. *Tagore's Gitanjali : A Commentary*, pp. 42-43.
6. This is the view of the non-dualists like Acharya Shankar.
7. The Upanishadic view is that at the time when the universe was going to be created, the Supreme Being said, "*ekoham bahusyamh* (I am one; let me become many).
8. *Tagore's Gitanjali : A Commentary*, p. 86.

Vasant A. Shahane

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND THE ROMANTIC TRADITION

I wish to examine in this paper Rabindranath Tagore's relationship with romanticism (or to borrow Arthur O. Lovejoy's idea, 'romanticisms') in the hope of finding a fairly acceptable answer to this rather complex problem. It is indeed difficult to define precisely what romanticism means or implies, and therefore one tends to agree with Lovejoy that the term be used as a plural—'romanticisms'—to encompass its various shades of meaning and its conceptual and critical pluralities. However, the attempt must be made with a view to unfolding an important aspect of Rabindranath Tagore—his relationship with, and his response, to the romantic tradition.

Although Rabindranath Tagore is considered to be the culmination of the romantic movement in Bengali literature, criticism of his poetry and plays does not for the most part explore the complex elements of his romantic creed and practice. While the critics accept and even emphasize Tagore as the supreme representative of romanticism in Bengali literature, they tend to overlook the limitation and modifications of the poet's romantic genre.

This essay aims both at expounding the nuances of Tagore's romantic creed and practice and at establishing the impact of some of the Western romantic poets on his work. It also attempts to show Tagore's romantic attitudes in relation to the modern age, especially as part of the modern cultural heritage, a newer kind of romanticism which becomes a phase of modern literary tradi-

tion. The principal idea underlying this new romanticism is that of a doctrine of experience, which indeed is, in my view, the essence of Tagore's romanticism.

Whereas many critics have touched upon the problem of "relevant and irrelevant comparisons" between Tagore on the one hand and many Western poets on the other in an attempt to "place" him and fit him into Western literary tradition, almost none of these has given adequate consideration to the Eastern characteristic of Tagore's sensibillty. "Certain it is, however," writes Dr. A. Aronson, "that Rabindranath's poetry could have been expected to fit in extraordinarily well not only with the 'jewelled raptures' of Francis Thompson, but also with the dreamy fairyland of W. B. Yeats, with the Irish folklore of AE (George Russell), even with the intricate and eccentric symbolism of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot's detached poetry of unrest and doubt."[1] Ezra Pound and W. B. Yeats in their own way reveal their understanding of the subtleties of Tagore's sensibility. Pound in a contemporary review of *Gitanjali* clearly shows his comprehension to the complexities involved in appreciating the Eastern sensibility in Tagore. He writes (*Fortnightly Review*, March 1939) : "I do not now think I have ever undertaken so difficult a problem of criticism, for one can praise most poetry in a series of antitheses. In the work of Mr. Tagore the source of the charm is in the subtle underflow."[2]

But few critics delve so deeply into the "subtle underflow" of Tagore's creative work as Ezra Pound has done. They seem to be content with merely drawing vague parallels between Tagore's poetry and that of other Western poets. For instance, Tagore's work has been compared rather casually with that of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Heine, AE, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Maeterlinck, Francis Thompson, Walt Whitman, and even Kipling.[3] Critics tend to emphasize the "Celtic" element in Rabindranath Tagore's poetry since W. B. Yeats was an enthusiastic admirer of the Indian poet. "Though Rabindranath was not an Irishman," writes Dr. Aronson, "they (critics) found affinities everywhere, however far-fetched they might be. Irish literary critics, indeed, took pride in establishing this parallel between the new Irish revival in poetry and Rabindranath."[3] This field of comparative appraisal is perhaps too widely extended—so much so that "the poems of *Gitanjali* have been compared to the work

of almost all the living or dead poets on earth, from Sappho to T. S. Eliot."[4] In the general context of such uncritical acceaptance of overgeneralized traits, the task of the present writer is to discover and substantiate the tangible elements of this comparative appraisal.

The terms "romantic" and "romanticism" appear very vague and inexact unless their implications are clearly stated and defined. Whereas the tenets—literary, aesthetic, and philosophical—of classicism and neo-classicism can be clearly pointed out, the ideas and principles underlying romanticism do not easily lend themselves to interpretative exactitude. It is partly due to the fact that romanticism is a dynamic movement, belonging to the world of becoming rather than being, and symbolizing the tensions of growth. The commonly accepted criteria of romanticism applied to various romantic poets are characterized more by diversity than by unity of feeling and attitudes. For instance, such diverse ideas as faith in democracy and glorification of the aristocratic idea, belief in Christain mysticism and atheistic humanism, choice for the fantastic and the extraordinary are equally characteristic of romanticism.

The most significant aspect of romanticism particularly that of early nineteenth century English literature, is a new and intense faith in the imagination. This is as true of Rabindranath Tagore as of Wordsworth and Coleridge, or Tennyson and Browning. Although Tagore lived far into the twentieth century and deeply influenced the Indian Renaissance, especially in Bengal, as a romantic poet he is in certain respects closer to Tennyson and Browning than to the early twentieth century English romantic poets. Edward Thompson discerned an affinity of spirit between Tagore's romantic sensibility and that of nineteenth century English romantic poets. "I have remembered always," he writes, "that Tagore...as a writer was the contemporary of the later Tennyson and Browning and of Robert Bridges. In fairness, he must be judged as the Victorian poets are judged, whose world has passed away."[5] The recorded fact that Rabindranath as a young man was especially fond of Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, and Browning lends weight to this literary assumption. He records his feeling for English literature in his *Reminiscences* : "Glancing back at the period of which I tell, it strikes me that we had gained more of stimulation than of nourishment out of English literature.

Our literary gods then were Shakespeare, Milton and Byron; and the quality of their work which stirred us most was strength of passion."[6] Rabindranath believed that in everyday social life an Englishman kept his passions severely in check and the pent-up storehouse of intense emotion found an exciting outlet in romantic poetry. Rabindranath in alluding to the romantic revival, confesses the great impact of Byron on his youthful mind: "There was another such day in English literature when the slow-measure of Pope's common time gave place to the dance-rhythm of the French Revolution. This had Byron for its poet. And the impetuosity of his passion also moved our veiled heart-bride in the seclusion of her corner."[7] Rabindranath's ways of expression and images clearly reveal the impact of romanticism upon him.

Although romanticism in Tagore is not purely a product of the impact of English poets (it is, in actuality, a combination of many diverse elements of the East and the West), many particular as well as general elements of romanticism forge the link between Tagore and nineteenth century British romantic poets. Rabindranath and the romantic poets turned away from reason to imaginaton and intuition. The divergence from the sophisticated to the primitive, the modern to the medieval, the artificial to the natural ways of feeling and expression is their common inheritance. Rabindranath's romantic imagination does not dwell upon the mundane, banal actualities of existence, but, as in Blake and Bridges, on the visions of the mysterious universe and the Creator. Rabindranath, in his passionate search for the divine life, expresses the Devotee's intense experiences of pain, perplexity, and joy. His realisation of the Life Divine takes place in parts and phases:

> I will meet one day the life within me, the joy that hides in my life, though the days perplex my path with their idle dust.
>
> I have known it in glimpses, and its fitful breath has come upon me making my thoughts fragrant for a while. I will meet one day the joy without me that dwells behind the screen of light—and will stand in the overflowing solitude where all things are seen by their creator.[8]

Rabindranath, like Keats, was not content with merely expressing the accepted moral truths. His contemplative imagination discerned truth in beauty. Rabindranath in his lecture on "The Sense of Beauty" actually quotes Keats in expounding his own ideas regarding the relationship of Truth with Beauty. Tagore says : All our literature, all our music and fine arts are tending towards the True, whether consciously or unconsciously; all of them seem to try to bring the True into prominent focus. The poet has said: Beauty is truth, truth beauty. The Upanishads too tell us: *Anandarupamrutam Yadvibhati,* all that is, is manifestation of his joy, His deathlessness. From the speck of dust at our feet to the stars in the heavens—all is, a manifestation of truth and beauty, of joy and immortality.[9]

Rabindranath, like Keats, is intensely devoted to the idea of the association of Beauty with Truth and of both with joy. But this fact should not be allowed to lead us to the facile conclusion that Keats influenced Tagore very profoundly. There is, of course, tangible evidence of this impact yet the fact remains that these romantic concepts in Tagore are deeply affected by his peculiar Eastern sensibility. The Eastern poet has always cherished the ideal of "Satyam, Shivam, Sunderam"—Truth, Piety, and Beauty. The impact of Keats on Tagore's mind and diction is limited, and it is certainly not as pronounced as that of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Whitman.

In portraying a harmonious and joyous relationship between man and nature, in relying upon the authenticity of intuition rather than reason of sense-impressions, in mystically visualizing the essential unity in the midst of diversity, and in the divine spirit that "rolls through all things" Wordsworth displays a greater affinity of spirit with Rabindranath than any other English poet. The oriental mystic thinks that the world is all *Maya,* an illusion and tries to pierce through this deceptive curtain and look beyond into the transcendental Reality. Tagore's understanding of this Reality, of our transcendental union with the eternal and divine being, apart from its specific Eastern element, bears a close resemblance to Wordsworth's perception of the divine. Neither Wordsworth's mystical attitudes nor Rabindranath's mystical perceptions can be fitted into a doctrine or system. They are the genuine expressions of their inmost selves, the flames that

feed their inner being. Wordsworth writes in *The Prelude*: "Whether we be young or old,/our destiny, our being's heart and home/Is with infinitude and only there." Rabindranath, in *Gitanjali* and several other poems has sung, of the relationship between our being and infinitude. Like Wordsworth he brings to nature a heart which watches and receives the mystic play of light and shadow, the god-sent moments of illumination. In *Gitanjali*, Rabindranath writes : "He (God) is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking the stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and his garment is covered with dust.... Meet him and stand by him in toil and in the sweat of thy brow."[10]

To Wordsworth as well as to Rabindranath the worship of God becomes true and real only through man's love of his fellow men. And Rabindranath's attempt at achieving a synthesis between the love of god and the love of man seems truly Wordsworthian. Moreover, in expounding his highly individualistic educational philosophy (which, in the opinion of Aldous Huxley, is Tagore's most significant contribution to creative thinking in relation to the West) Tagore seems to preach and practise true Wordsworthian ideas. It appears as though Wordsworth's Lucy has by some miracle gone to school at Shantiniketan. Rabindranath's ideal pupils "close the barren leaves" of dry and stagnant knowledge and approach nature with a heart that watches and receives its perennial meaning as well as transitory movements.

Morse Peckham in outlining his theory of Romanticism speaks about 'Organicism'—a sense of organic growth—as one of its essential elements. There is obviously a correlation between the process of growth of a plant or a flower and a romantic image. Both seem to develop organistically thus giving you the feeling of natural, Sylvan efflorescence. In the following extract from *The Fugitive* Rabindranath speaks of man's intimate relationship with Nature and indirectly of its organic growth : "How often great Earth have I felt my being yearn to flow over you, sharing in the happiness of each blade that raises its signal banner in answer to the beckoning blue of the sky. I feel as if I had belonged to you ages before I was born. That is why, in the days when the autumn light shimmers on the mellowing ears of rice, I seem to remember a past when my mind was everywhere, and even to hear voices as of play-fellows echoing from the remote and deeply veiled past.

When in the evening, the cattle return to their folds, raising dust from the meadow paths, as the moon rises higher than the smoke ascending from the village huts, I feel sad as for some great separation that happened in the first morning of existence."

Thus, to Tagore nature is the primal storehouse of this organic spirit which gives Man a sense of belonging to this earth.

If in his mystical rendering of the transcendental unity, Rabindranath recalls the idea poetically expressed by Wordsworth, in his passionate singing of and devotion to the idea of liberty he shows an affinity of spirit with Shelley and Byron. Whereas Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound* rejoices over the downfall of tyranny—Prometheus over throwing Jupiter—and the victory of forgiveness and love in lyric rapture, Rabindranath poetically visualizes a world,

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;
> Where knowledge is free;
> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ;
> Where words come out from the depth of truth ;
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
> Where the clear stream of wisdom has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;
> Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—
> Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.[11]

This is an eloquent declaration of Rabindranath's humanistic faith in which intellect and emotion are splendidly fused. Tagore does not seek merely the salvation of the individual but, like Shelley, also cherishes the ideal of the collective happiness and freedom of the human race.

This leads us to a consideration of Tagore's ideas on "Personality" in relation to Walt Whitman's notions of "Personalism". It must be stated hear that Tagore was a great admirer of Walt Whitman and specfically praised his "pictures." In his lecture on "The World of Personality" Tagore also praised Whitman's philosophical beliefs. It is significant to note that Whitman's use of the term "Personalism" (in *Democratic Vistas*, 1870)

bears close resemblance to Tagore's ideas in his essay on "Personality." Alcott and other American transcendentalists used the term "Personalism" to show that "The ultimate reality of the world is a Divine Person who sustains the universe by a continuous act of creative will." Rabindranath too, quoting the teaching of Isha Upanihad "that all that moves in this moving world is held by rhe infinity of God" in his lecture on "The World of Personality," almost echoes Walt Whitman's ideas when he declares : "these world movements are not mere blind movements, they are related to the will of a Supreme Person."[12]

Although Tagore does not clearly attempt to fit the doctirnes of evolution and other scientific ideas into his transcendental scheme, as Walt Whitman does, he nevertheless comes close to Whitman in expressing his impatience with the stark and bare facts of science. Tagore reveals his sense of impatience with the dry details of astronomy by quoting Walt Whitman's well known poem "When I heard the learn'd astronomer." His comments on Whitman's poem clearly indicated his relationship with the spirit of the great American poet. Tagore writes : "The prosody of the stars can be explained in the classroom by diagrams, but the poetry of the stars is in the silent meeting of soul with soul...."[13]

The affinity of spirit between Walt Whitman and Tagore strikes a much deeper note than is indicated here. Whitman is a singer and prophet of American—Jeffersonian—democracy, and Tagore is the singer of the Indian Renaissance and of his country's struggles for political freedom. The sentiments in Whitman's Civil War poems bear a close resemblance to the emotions in Rabindranath's intensely patriotic poems inspired by the threatened partition of Bengal in 1905-09. Moreover both Whitman and Tagore share the true poet's distrust of conventional codes of moral conduct and social institutions which have outlived their utility.

It would appear then that Tagore is, subject to limitations of a peculiar Eastern sensibility, directly as well as indirectly influenced by the ideas and feelings in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Walt Whitman. He is in many ways part of the romantic tradition in world literature.

In consonance with the romantic tradition Tagore is, like many of his forbears, turned away from established and outworn religious creeds to refreshingly independent and highly individualistic

ways of realizing the divine. Romanticism in Rabindranth is observed in a moving away from impersonal objectivity to an inwardly-felt individuality ; from the old Sanskrit classical order to the new notion of intensity ; from a self-conscious adherence to tradition to an equally self-conscious creative originality ; from prosaic directness in expression to myth, image, and symbol. It is needless to stress further the link that binds Tagore's ideas and mind to those of early nineteenth century romantic poets.

But it is perhaps true to say that Rabindranath Tagore is neither completely influenced by English and European poets, nor is he wholly affected by his forbears in Bengali or Sanskrit literature. He surely draws sustenance from the tradition of Bengali and Sanskrit poetry. Romanticism in his work, therefore, is related to his Vaisnava faith ; his adherence to the doctrine of Bhakti ; his intuitional awareness of the Divine, his mysticism, his intense love of liberty. His romanticism is, *in part*, the result of the impact upon his mind of English poetry and Western thought. It is unfair to proclaim that Rabindranath's poetry and his mind were fed solely on foreign fare. Edward Thompson quotes the opinion of a distinguished Bengali scholar, cited below, which seems to me wide of the mark. The anonymous Bengali scholar has completely over-looked the traditional pattern in Tagore, the beauty and vigour of his language, the new, individualistic contemplative intensity poured into traditional ways of meditation. The charage of subservience to foreign culture and literature is therefore untenable. This scholar writes : "He (Tagore) was born in Bengal, but in a Europeanized atmosphere, in which there was hardly any indigenous element, except, perhaps, a culture of the Upanishads. His mode of thinking is so essentially English that I appreciate his English translation of the *Gitanjali* far better than the original Bengali. Owing to his poetry being thoroughly imbued with Western ideas, he appeals to his English readers more widely than to Bengalis. Amongst us, those only who have lost all touch with the old vernacular literature and with the life of the people, reading only European books, are his admirers. The rest are bewildered by his Bengali style, to which they are not accustomed and which, when rendered in English, appears happier and more natural. The much-admired mysticism is but a feeble echo of the message that the Upanishads have brought to us. His love

poems have only fleeting emotions, and leave hardly any impression after one reading. If our country loses herself headlong in the sea of foreign culture, he will no doubt be the harbinger of the new literary age. But if otherwise, I am sure his fame will fade and in the annals of our literature he will be remembered only as the head of a school that drew its inspiration from foreign sources. European appreciation does not weigh much with us, it only shows that he has acquired the poetical knack of saying things in such a way as will readily appeal to the European mind."[14]

Yet this expression of opinion serves as a negative proof of the impact of English romantic poets on the mind of Rabindranath. Every creative writer is open to influences. His mind is like a pipe for any wind to play upon, but he stays where he is. He is not swept off his feet by winds blowing from foreign lands. The scholar has gravely misjudged the difference between natural impact and unnatural imitation.

A great deal of evidence can be adduced in support of the assumption that Rabindranath is an author deeply influenced by romanticism, either of the East or of the West or both. Yet Tagore's romanticism is not, in actuality, a clearly laid out, well-defined creed. Romanticism in Rabindranath reaches a new height and at that stage joins hands with realism.

Romanticism in Tagore may be considered in relation of the modern age, its traditionalism and anti-traditionalism. It may also be interpreted as essentially a doctrine of experience since it champions the validity and vitality of the individual's perception against scientific speculation and abstraction generated by the eighteenth century doctrine of Enlightenment. Romanticism itself becomes a search after values in an age increasingly dominated by scientific rationalism and philosophic nihilism. The Enlightenment has bequeathed to the intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a world of knowledge without values. The predicament of modern man is that he is called upon to navigate the small vessel of his individual faith engulfed by an adverse tide of unbelief. Neither the religious tradition nor science guides him in his voyage. He therefore depends entirely upon his individual awareness of the Universe and the Divine to steer his ship clear through the aggressive and apathetic waves of disbelief

and nihilism. Romanticism thus becomes a new nomenclature for the doctrine of experience in thought and feeling. It becomes almost a new and modern tradition in twentieth century literature.

The term "modern tradition" may seem seem rather paradoxical, though in reality, it is a phase of modern literary beliefs. Thanks to T. S. Eliot, we, unlike the Edwardians, zealously admire the spiritual and moral "tradition." The Edwardians were iconoclasts, un-Victorian, even anti-Victorian. T.S. Eliot made us realize the post-War phase that we have lost our Anglo-Catholic tradition, our roots. He thought in terms of Christain and humanist traditions. Our forlorn state was brought home to our minds. We began to value the tradition and this attitude, oddly enough became a hallmark of modernity. The progressive, modern man became, in this way, an upholder of the spiritual tradition. The modern intellectual is a traditionalist as well as an anti-traditionalist. While valuing the humanist tradition, he is opposed to its other—mechanistic, rational, nihilistic—elements. He pins his faith on his individual awareness of the Divine and thus champions a new Romanticism—almost a new tradition in twentieth century literature.

The dichotomous quality of man's response to Nature has been a constant source of inspiration and theme to modern poets. Modern life is overshadowed by a sense of meaninglessness, a divorce between man and Nature and a growing sense of alienation from the earth. W. H. Auden expresses this schism with great effect (*Poems*, poem IX) :

> Here am I, here are you :
> But what does it mean ? What are we going to do ?

Rabindranath, too, is quite conscious of this schism and his entire poetic effort is directed to upholding and vindicating the cause of man's fundamental unity with Nature.

Romanticism in Tagore is related to this modern humanist tradition and also to the doctrine of experience. Rabindranath's lyrics, says W. B. Yeats, are "full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention.... The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes. A tradition, where poetry and religion are the same thing, has passed through

the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion, and carried back again to the multitude the thought of the scholar and of the noble."[13] Thus the tradition and the individual experience in Tagore are synthesized in the harmony of his art. Yeats feels that birds and the leaves "seem as near to Tagore as they are near to children." The essence of Rabindranath's poetry is the intensity of his experience. On purely artistic as well as philosophical level it is essentially a poetry of experience. We find that "when he (Rabindranath) was very young he wrote much of natural objects, he would sit all day in his garden...."[16] Again, "every morning at three—I know, for I have seen it—he sits immovable in contemplation, and for two hours does not awake from his reverie upon the nature of God."[17] Rabindranath's imagination was captivated by Indian flowers and rivers, the heavy rains of *Shravan* and *Ashadha*, the parching heat of *Greeshma* and the fragrant beauties of the Indian spring. These objects of nature become images of moods—of separation and union. "A man sitting in a boat," writes Yeats, "upon a river playing upon a lute, like one of those figures full of mysterious meaning in a Chinese picture, is God Himself."[18] The contact between the poet and the earth—objects of nature—was not merely physical ; it assumed a spiritual level. It fulfilled and enhanced his whole being. "In London", writes Ernest Rhys, "Rabindranath would laugh at the smoky sunlight as only the shadow of the sun of Bengal."[19] In his discourse upon the Upanishads the poet-philosopher dwells upon its splendour : "The sun is the honey of the gods. The heaven is the cross-beam, and the sky hangs from it like a hive; the bright vapours are the swarming bees."[20]

The beauty and contemplative intensity of Rabinnranath's nature poetry can be traced to his innate, personal experience. The poet expresses his mystical communion with God. He writes :

> Have you not heard his silent steps ? He comes, ever comes.
>
> Every moment and every age, every day and every night he comes,
> comes, ever comes.
> Many a song have I sung in a many a mood of mind,

but all their notes have always proclaimed,
"He comes, comes, ever comes."[21]

Rabindranath's love poetry is deeply imbued with romanticism. His use of words and images clearly reveals the intensity of his subjective experience. He writes :

Your feet are rosy-red with the glow of my heart's desire,
Gleaner of my sunset songs !
Your lips are bitter-sweet with the taste of my wine of pain.
You are my own, my own, Dweller in my lonesome dreams ![22]

To sum up the main argument, then, it must be stated that romanticism in Rabinnranath Tagore conforms to a new doctrine of experience. It is an aspect of the modern literary tradition. His poetry swings between two poles—a towering, rich, ennobling imagination and a deeply-felt, intense experience. The high, majestic quality of his imagination combined with his intense personal awareness and experience makes him a dreamer of dreams as well as a realistic champion of humanist values. He is one of those great romantic poets whose imaginative energies are not expended simply in visualizing a kingdom of heaven above common humanity, but in transforming this Kingdom of earth into a genuine, blissful Kingdom of heaven.

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Uma Banerjee

SHELLEY'S *ODE TO THE WEST WIND* AND TAGORE'S *THE YEAR ENDS* : A STUDY IN INFLUENCE

The Romantics of the literary field have been subjected to much of criticism by the so called pundits in both English and Bengali literatures. Their fates have hung into balances, being either overpraised or underestimated. These poets, particularly have suffered in the hands of the culture-vultures because they have chosen a non-conformist path for most of the time, without bothering to explain themselves through cut-and-dried poetic theories. Shelley, is one such enigma in English poetry. Rabindra nath Tagore is another in the realm of Bengali poetry.

The spirit of intense creativity, the "soaring with trembling pinions"[1], the insatible thirst for newer and newer horizons that dominate Shelley's world of poetic adventure, have never been so wholly and vividly potrayed as in his ode of odes: *Ode to the West Wind.*

Rabindranath Tagore's ode, *The Year Ends*,[2] flashes the same interplay of moods, the almost supernatural effect of the changing phenomena of nature amounting to the personification of divine spirit and brings alive, line by line, stanza by stanza, and even rhyme scheme, an overwhelming influence of the Shelleyean spirit. Shelley's ode was published in 1920. According to Mary Shelley, "this poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence .... They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions."[3] According to Tagore's own note, "I decided to include some of my best poems in this collection. This poem, (*The Year*

Ends) was written on a tempestuous, stormy evening that violently activated my imagination."[4] Tagore's ode was written on the last day of the last month—Chaitra of the Bengali year, the month of Basanta (spring). Thus the situational inspiration that fired both the Romantics was same in both the physical and psychological context. What is amazingly conspicuous is, perhaps, the unvarying resemblance between the two odes, that should not be confused with blind imitation as could have happened in the case of lesser poets.

Shelley has displayed a wonderful sense of technical exellence by intertwining the three-lined stanza form to bring out the exact atmosphere of the restlessness of that particular hour in nature. The tumultuous onrushing of the gigantic nature phenomena raises the fevered imagination of the poets to the highest pitch of romantic excitement that is concretized in the drumbeats of the three lined stanza : aba, bcb and so on. Tagore has offered the same technical splendour in his ode, that he himself recognizes as a new technical innovation.[5] Tagore has adopted Shelley's theme to the Indian sensibility and thus his invocation is not to the "BAISAKHI" (West Wind) alone, but it is also directed to the raven black, thunderous belt of cloud as well. This doubtless shows, the Indian poet's instinctive adoption of the Tropical atmospherc which generates ample quantities of torrential rain, whenever charged with vaporous heat. The thematic aspect is kept intact, though the stanzas are differently sequenced according to the pattern that suited Tagore's own language. He does not succumb to the temptation of a couplet at the end of each part, for that would only slow down the fast rhythm of his own eight-lined stanza form, complete in itself. Nor does he detract from this pattern but continues it to the end unlike Shelley, to ensure the "running-water"[6] melody, that is peculiar to Tagorean poetry.

The first two stanzas of *The Year Ends* describe the natural scenery with dark enticing colours, signifying the fearful onslaught of the thunderstorm in the Shelleyean way. The poet is ready to welcome "Dirge of the dying year"[7] and waits, each nerve pulsating ecstatically with the reverberating sound of the footsteps of the mighty conqueror—"The Destroyer and the preserver"[8]. In the third stanza, the poet refers to the "dead leaves of my heart, faded, lifeless, withered, that should be driven away by the fresh, invigorating west wind, it has brought the rich sense of a new

birth, the sense of divine inspiration for new creativity to the poet's heart"[9]. The fourth stanza perfectly identifies a pictorial dance-scape portraying the fierce "Maenad"[10] with the bright hair uplifted from the head signifying the violent movement in nature. The whirlwind movements of the swiftly paced lightning searing the thunderclouds, depict the flying foot-work of the divine dancer intensely alive only to the drumbeats of the accompanying drummer caring little whether the audience responses with frenzy or apathy. The Shelleyean dynamism is found in the juxtaposition of emotions in the same breath : "The terrifying dance evokes an amalgamation of ecstasy and fear, weeping with thrilling hearts."[11]

Stanzas 5 to 8 are devoted to the passionate welcoming of the west wind, the destroyer and the preserver, who strikes without mercy at the dead and the dying to bring in the new era of creativity. In the fifth stanza, the poet has cried out in trembling hope, "come to me, Oh awful, like the booming sound of a mighty conchshell, your voice should strike fear ; bring out the merciless contentment of the heroic soul", reminding one of the lines : know/Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,/And tremble and despoil themselves : oh hear !"[13] Tagore continues with the same thought in the next stanza : "In a moment the whole atmosphere will be filled up with black rainy clouds with the fire of the thunderbolt, and the earth is struck with hail bursts,"[14] while in Shelley, the very words are found : "...from whose solid atmosphere/Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : oh hear : "[15]

Shelley implores, "Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is."[16] The west wind is the musician, its music harmonising the most discordant notes of human heart and enchanting mankind with the freshest and newest lyrics of cameraderie. Tagore's west wind also breaths out sublime notes of melodious symphony, striking vibrant chords in his lyre: "Oh strike new notes, high notes on your lyre, Oh master, sing without restraint, let my heart bleed with music and throb with the rhythm of a new birth."[17] This sublime music, vibrating with the freedom-sweetened notes of destruction of the old and despoiled, coupled with the birth of the new and fresh, makes the poet strain at his established, safe, subservient values of life and following Shelley, he also solemnly promises in the ninth and tenth stanza : "I promise, Oh

untamed, uncontrollable spirit that the dead leaves of my thought will be shaken away, I bow to thee, again and again."[18]

Shelley's west wind is embodied with the glory and spontaneous energy of youth. He is the supreme conqueror, the untamed spirit overriding all obstructions, the Apollo of Shelley's boyhood dreams, in the IIth and 12th stanza of *The Year Ends.* Shelley's influence is easily discernible, when Tagore addressess the storm wind as, "Oh newly born prince, you are blessed with the glories of everlasting freshness.... I await your victory flag, Oh prince if your arrow pierces my bossom, I shall happily sing the song of your victory...."[19] The Shelleyean influence continues in the next two stanzas, 13th and 14th, when Tagore's frustration knows no bound even as he upturns his emaclated face to quench the thirst of the poetic soul with the spring of the divine inspiration brought down by the mighty current of the west wind : "sick and tired of these petty quarrels of this life of mine, I urge you to lift me up with you, carry me with you, make me feel the great ness That is death, I am ready to be forsaken for eternity afterwards, if I can but experience one wonderful moment of poetic glory."[20] Shelley's passionate outburst, written in the scarlet ink of his life-blood is echoed in a nerver-acking intensity in the Tagorean line, "Oh, unendurable is this fragmentation of life, unedurable is this devastation, moment by each painful moment."[21]

The trumpet of a prophecy—Shelley calls the west wind for it is the harbinger of the Utopia, that constantly prevailed on Shelley's imagination. It is the utopia of this poetic imagination as it is of the social conditions around him. The west wind is going to bring forth the great change, the yielding of the old order to a marvellous period of rejuvenation through the much awaited birth of the new. The black mourning winter clouds disappear, leaving the wide blue sky open and clear for the dazzling spring sun to emerge with the lustre of the ever bright vision of life. Tagore expresses the same thought in the last two stanzas, when he says : "Oh wild one, your job is done and mine too. You have come with your mighty sword, destroying the old, the unwanted, the desperate, and paved the way for the new and the young. With the dying year, I also end the dirge or my frustrations. I wait breathlessly, with bowed head and humbled heart, for the new spirit in the year to come."[23]

One is always unsure when making equations in great poetry. Poets are their own evaluators, and since their poetic faculties are continuously surcharged with fresh passions, the evaluating process undergoes swift and surprising changes. That Tagore was spell-bound by Shelleyan romanticism had been acknowledged with the frankness that was characteristic of the former. In his preface to *Chayanika* he says: "I am an incurable romantic and have been devoted to the Romantics, specially Shelley."[24] *The Year Ends* illustrates this influence into no uncertain terms, since the Shelleyean trend of divine madness electrifies each line of the Tagorean composition, though the originality of each passion-filled heart is retained through its natural diction and artistic variation.

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Susheel Kumar Sharma

THE THEME OF ALIENATION IN *GITANJALI*

Tagore's Bangla songs which were later on rendered into English and published in the form of *Gitanjali* were composed in the first decade of this century. This decade had a saddening effect on Tagore's life as it had brought five deaths in the poet's family viz. that of his wife[1] in 1902, of his second daughter in 1903, of his eldest daughter in 1904, of his father in 1905 and of his youngest son[2] in 1907. It is this sadness that finds projection in his compositions. Some other factors which must have intensified Tagore's sadness, also, need to be mentioned. He did not receive much parental care as his mother suffered from a chronic disease and his father was too busy to spare much time for his children; he did not receive good schooling and the conditions prevailing over there made him regard them jails and hospitals. His brother's wife, who had taken the place of his mother after her death also had died, while he was still a boy. These incidents must have led Tagore to what Nissim Ezekiel calls genuine alienation[3] and the born artist made its creative use to write a piece like *Gitanjali* which earned him the Nobel Prize, though Tagore did not turn hostile and hate anybody[4]. It would not be out of place to quote Tagore himself on this subject :

> There is period in every man's life when his feelings have the pathos of the inexpressible, the anguish of vagueness. The poetry which attempts its expression cannot be called baseless.... There is a duality in man... when the outward life fails to harmonize with the inner, the dweller within is hurt, and his pain manifests

> itself in the outer consciousness in a manner to which it is difficult to give a name, or even to describe, and of which the cry is more akin to an inarticulate wail than to words with more precise meaning.... These 'Evening Songs' are the history of struggle. As in all creation, so in poetry, there is the opposition of forces. If the divergence is too wide, or the unison too close, there is, it seems to me, no room for poetry, where the pain of discord strives to attain and express its resolution into harmony, there does poetry break forth into music, as breath through a flute....[5]

The alienation[6] embodied in these songs has the following dimensions :

(i) The persona finds himself lonely even though there is a crowd around.
(ii) The persona is not able to please his master.
(iii) The persona is waiting for his friend/lover/beloved who does not turn up.
(iv) The persona loses sight of his true being.
(v) The persona is away from the deity.

They are the alienation[7] of the following kinds :

(i) Alienation from the fellow members of the community.
(ii) Alienation from one's master.
(iii) Alienation from one's friend/lover/beloved.
(iv) Alienation from one's own self.
(v) Spiritual alienation.

The alienation of the first kind has been embodied in songs like the 17th and 32nd; that of the second type in the songs like the 5th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th; that of the third kind in the songs like the 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 30th; and that of the last type in the songs like the 13th and 18th.

In a large number of Tagore's songs the persona is a lonely person who does not care for anyone in the crowd but wants to meet the Lord who is expected to arrive but arrives very rarely. That is the reason why the persona in many of the songs is an alienated person. Here, we have roughly two kinds of poems : those in which the persona is seeking the grace of the master and is waiting for him to come, and those in which the persona is

seeking the love of his friend or the beloved. The persona of the poems of the first category is a man without any sense of guilt but the second category feels guilty and is conscious of the fact that what he or she is indulging in is illegitimate and so undesirable (see infra).

In the 17th song the persona is alienated from the fellow members of his community. Here, there are people around the persona and they want him to remain in their company, but he has enraged them by paying no heed to them. Here the community feels offended when the persona does not consider its member worth heeding to. So, no doubt, it is not the community that can be blamed for the perrona's alienation, yet it cannot be doubted that the persona has been alienated here whoever may be at fault for it.

Alienation from the master has been embodied in the songs in which the speakers try to please the master but fail to or are waiting for the master to come but get nothing but frustration in return. In song no.6 'the persona asks for a moment's indulgence to sit by the master's side. Here the persona has only one desire, i.e. to get the master's company. He has not realized how difficult it is to attain it. In the sixth song he starts making efforts in the direction and plucks a flower to use in the master's service. Henceforth, we have an onward movement; in the seventh song the persona puts off adornments and attains simplicity; in the eighth song he justifies simplicity saying the ornamental robes keep a person away from "the great fair of common human life."[9] In the ninth song he advises himself to leave all burdens to the master. It is in the tenth song that the search begins : the persona finds the master's feet resting at the place where the poorest, lowliest and lost live. In the eleventh song he advises himself not to try to reach the master through chanting, singing and counting beads, but to find the master at the place where the tiller and the path-maker are doing their work. Tagore considers it better to put on tattered clothes and be in the company of human beings than to be dressed in a sophisticated manner and be in the company of inanimate objects (Song VII, VIII). But the realization that the suggestion like the one that the master is with the tiller and the path-maker are naive, begins to dawn on the persona in the 12th song which is about the quest of identity. He says that the time which his journey takes is long and

the way too is long. It is here that he has become conscious of intricacies. He admits his failure in the 13th song when he says that he is living "in the hope of meeting with him; but this meeting is not yet" (*Gitanjali*, p. 9). However, it appears that the meeting can take place because the persona "has heard (the master's) gentle footsteps from the road before (his) house" (*Gitanjali*, p. 8). The master seems willing, or rather, eager to oblige the persona. That is why upto this song the learner makes no complaint against the master. It is in the fourteenth song that we have a glimpse of the conflicting approaches of the master and the persona : the persona has a large number of desires but the latter hides from the former. But here too the persona has not lost faith in the master's sympathy for him and the fact is evidenced by his saying in the last sentence that the master is making him worth of his full acceptance by refusing to gratify his desires. In the 39th poem the persona is calling his king to come to him. Here the persona, as he says, is heading towards the condition in which his heart will be hard and parched up, grace will be lost, he will be found sitting crouched and shut up in a corner, and desire will blind the mind with delusion and dust. The persona prays to his king to come to him. In the 40th poem the persona is in a state of "dire despair". He describes himself as one being caused great trouble by "pervading heat" and prays to God to send rain-showering clouds.

In the 18th song the persona is at the beloved's door on a dark lonely day but she does not show him even her face. He cries in agony, "Why dost thou let me wait outside the door all alone ?" (*Gitanjali*, p. 11). In the 19th song, too, he is waiting at night for her to speak but does not say anything. He, however, consoles himself with the idea that in the morning her words will reach people's ears in the form of bird's songs. The persona in the 20th poem is a sad fellow who tries to escape from his own self with the result that he fails to perceive that the lotus has bloomed in the depth of his own heart. In other words, he realizes the need to realize his 'self'. In the 21st song, too, the persona is sad to find that the spring has come and gone but he is still waiting with the burden of faded futile flowers. He projects his inner emptiness when he utters : "The languid hours pass by on the shore" (*Gitanjali*, p. 13). He is accompanied by a person who keeps on gazing upon emtpiness only. The persona is able to hear a "far-away song floating from the other

shore" (*Gitanjali*, p. 13), but the companion has not been able to hear even that. In the 22nd song the beloved appears as a solitary way farerer in the deserted street, but she does not enter the persona's house in spite of his request to her. In the 23rd song the persona is suffering with a sense of anxiety and suffering. He spends a sleepless night waiting for the beloved but there is no trace of hers anywhere.

The persona of Song XXIV has exhausted himself and no more wants to have *one fight more*. He prays for an early death which he thinks will balm all his miseries and put an end to all troubles of his life: "From the traveller, whose sack of provisions is empty before the voyage is ended, whose garment is torn and dustladen, whose strength is exhausted, remove shame and poverty, and renew his life..." (*Gitanjali*, p. 14). The lack of self-confidence and self-reliance makes the persona alienated and he prays for mercy to be shown to him. This persona, on the outset, feels alienated from the society because of meaninglessness and futility of the life. He says: "If the day is done, if birds sing no more,[10] if the mind has flagged tired, then draw the veil of darkness thick upon me..." (*Gitanjali*, p. 14). This surceasing flow of life around the place where the persona lives enhances the degree of alienation. The persona of the song no. 25 has no ray of hope left in his heart. He does not have any confidence left for/in struggle. The melancholy overcomes the persona who utters: "Let me not force my flagging spirit into a poor preparation for thy workshop." (*Gitanjali*, p. 15). This makes him alienated and he wishes to die: "In the night of weariness let me give myself upto sleep without struggle resting my trust upon you" (*Gitanjali*, p. 15). This resignation of the worldly duties of the persona is comparable to that of the lotos-eaters who exclaim "Death is the end of life, ah why/should life all labour be ?"[11] In the 26th song the persona feels desolated for a different reason: the friend came and sat by her side but the persona did/could not wake up. Thus his awakening for so many nights by way of his efforts to meet him has become futile. In the 25th song he likes to go to bed as he appears to be tired of waiting.[12]

The persona of Song XXVII is perturbed to see that he cannot find the way out to meet the lover and feels that he is lost in the darkness. The central thought of this song being the expression of desolate loneliness, on account of the outward circumstances:

"A moment's flash of lightening drags down a deeper gloom on my sight, and my heart gropes for the path to where the music of night calls me"[13] (*Gitanjali*, p. 16). The sense of loneliness and desolation of the persona is conveyed through the image of a lamp: "There is a lamp but never a flicker of a flame—is such thy fate, my heart ? Ah, death were better by far for thee !" (*Gitanjali*, p. 15). The wildness of nature hightens the feelings of desolation: "It thunders and the wind rushes screaming through the void. The night is black as a black stone" (*Gitanjali*, p. 16). However, the persona is not able to reach the stage of alienation of the self as he utters: "Let not the hours pass by in the dark. Kindle the lamp of love with thy life" (*Gitanjali*, p. 16).

The persona of song XLI, a beloved, is waiting for her lover like Tennyson's Mariana (in 'Mariana in South'). The theme of both these poems is desolation and loneliness. The beloved of this song is searching her lover (symbolising her identity): "Where dost thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadows ?" (*Gitanjali*, p. 23). In the absence of the lover (the true master), others are exploiting the beloved: "I wait here weary hours spreading my offerings for thee, while passers-by come and take my flowers, one by one, and my basket is nearly empty" (*Gitanjali*, pp. 21-22). To increase her isolation, passers-by mock at her and smile scornfully. The feeling of estrangement is so bitter that she has to cover her face "drawing (her) skirt over (her) face" (p. 24) and she leaves responding. Like Mariana, she also dreams of having her lover approaching her. The feeling of self-estrangement, resulting from futility of life is heightened when she realizes that her lover would not come :

> But the time glides on and still no sound of the wheels of thy chariot. Many a procession passes by with noise and shouts and glamour of glory. Is it only thou who wouldst stand in the shadow silent and behind them all ? And only I who would wait and weep and wear out my heart in vain longing ? (*Gitanjali*, pp. 24-25)

In the 42nd song the persona is a singer who is waiting for the beloved to come and to enjoy a boat-ride with her but she does not come even though evening does. Actually, he is a dreamer who wants an easy escape from the drudgery of the earthly life by running away with his companion. Since the

persona does not want to tell about it to anybody ("...and never a soul in the world would know of this our pilgrimage to no country and to no end" (*Gitanjali*, p. 25), it is a case of social alienation. In the 43rd song the beloved is recollecting the day when the king was with her but at the moment she is alone. In the 47th song the persona is a beloved who has waited for the lover throughout the night but he has not come and she is thinking of going to sleep towards its end. In song no. 54 a beloved recollects how a traveller who got water from her fell in love with her but now she is lonely with nobody to share her thoughts. Song 28th depicts a persona with a split personality who sometimes feels associated with the physical world and at others with the spiritual one.[14] As a result of this duality the persona sometimes feels alienated from this world and considers this world as a veil (Maya) as do the Vedantic thinkers: "This shroud that covers me is a shroud of dust and death; I hate it...." (*Gitanjali*, p. 16). At others he considers God to be the ultimate reality and says, "I am certain that priceless wealth is in thee, and that thou art my best friend..." (*Gitanjali*, p. 16). This duality does not let him be resolute; rather it makes him indecisive. It results in his alienation–both physical and spiritual. The persona gives this complex situation an utterance when he says: "Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel ashamed" (*Gitanjali*, p. 16).

Dream, madness and vision all help in alienating a man from his world and its social responsibilities. The persona of Song XXII is a visionary who could see a person even in "the deep shadows of the rainy July, with secret steps,...silent as night, eluding all watchers" (*Gitanjali*, p. 13). The persona repudiates the world and pronounces immunity from its disturbances and troubles in the depths of his own being and feels : "Thou art the solitary wayfarer in this deserted street" *Gitanjali*, p. 13). The persona expresses his detachment from the sordid realities of life in the expressions like, "morning has closed its eyes" and "a thick veil has been drawn over the ever-wakeful sky" (p. 13). The persona of Song XLV is having some hallucinations which alienate him from society. In a fit of hallucination the persona cries, "Have you not heard his silent steps ? He comes, comes, ever comes." He is haunted by hallucinations because he finds his sorrow unbearable. The persona of Song XLVIII is a visionary who dreams to have reached his ultimate goal and realize the

reality without trying very hard for it. He has been in the company of questers who are alienated from society "while we busily went on our way and paid no heed" (*Gitanjali*, p. 20). After sometime the persona is fed up with the hectic quest that his companions are making. He does it for taking rest. He sleeps in the company of a shepherd boy who "drowsed and dreamed in the shadow of the banyan tree" (p. 29). The description of shepherd gives the impression that he is also alienated from the society and is lost in dreams. The other companions of the persona alienate themselves from him (and thus from society as he is only a unit of society) and continue making the quest. They alienate themselves emotionally from the society because they "laughed...in scorn" (p. 29), mock and reproach a unit of society (i.e. the persona). The persona establishes a rapport with the things around him with the result that "the sun-embroidered green gloom slowly spread over (his) heart "(p. 30). This results in his realization of the object of his quest. This makes it clear that for Tagore, it is only by socialization that one can know the reality and get success in his venture; alienation simply intensifies a problem and does not soften it.

We have the fourth kind of alienation in the 29th and the 30th songs. In the 29th song the persona describes his estrangement from himself: he has raised the walls of the dungeon and has lost sight of his true being. The wall symbolises material wealth which the persona is accumulating day by day. The persona himself is aware of the fact that he has been accumulating "dust and sand" (*Gitanjali*, p. 17) and it results in the loss of identity: "I lose sight of my true being in its dark shadow" (*Gitanjali*, p. 17). The persona is well aware of the Biblical saying: "Dust thou art and to dust thou returnest" and also, "Man lives not by bread alone" but he does not make any effort to remove his estrangement. He goes on *getting and spending* and laying his powers waste.

In the 30th song the persona is at war with his inner self as he is going to tryst to meet the beloved secretly, but the inner self puts him to shame by telling him in plain terms that what he is going to do is undesirable. Tagore wrote at another place :

> In me as in everyman there are two 'I's.... The one is petty, individual, the prisioner of the environment; the

> other is lofty, universal, joined with the bondless infinite. My life is a perpetual struggle for release from the petty 'I'....My life quest consists in the daily effort to crush the pettier self....

This shows that Tagore does not take to a mission unlike the Yogi who attains *samatwam* and hence feels alienated. The personality of this persona is schizophrenic, to use a psychoanalytic term, which makes him alienated from his own self. The persona of Song XLVII is estranged from self. He wants to die, since he has no hope of betterment in his life. He has been waiting for a deliverer but the latter has not turned up with the result that the persona has "fallen asleep wearied out" (p. 28). The persona is so much obsessed by the deliverer that he wishes to return to him if he revives: "And let my return to myself be immediate return to him" (*Gitanjali*, p. 29). His obsession further alienates him from the society and other duties.

The persona feels spiritually alienated and cries in agony: "...why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone ?" (Song XVIII, p. 11). He is not able to meet God because the persona wants to have a meeting "on this dark lonely day" when he has kept himself aloof from the busy schedule of life and is waiting "only for thee" away from crowd. God does not care for such persons as the persona of Song XVII has left his work and is waiting for an exclusive meeting with God. Such a person is alienated from the society: "Those who came to call me in vain have gone back in anger" (p. 11) and "People blame me and call me heedless" (Song XVII, p. 11) and from God as well ("I keep gazing on the far-away gloom of the sky, and my heart wanders waiting with the restless wind" (*Gitanjali*, p. 11) when such a persona is not able to associate himself with either of these, he turns back to the worldly things (as is the case with the persona of Song XIX) and tries to associate himself with them considering them to be the objects of God's love. Thus, alienating oneself from the worldly affairs/objects is not the proper way to have an association with God. The Song 13 is the bewailing of a desolate persona who has not been able to meet his deity. This song shows how a devotee can feel spiritually alienated. He has not been able to see the face of God, hence the song remains unsung. The aspiration is strong and its frustration cause a deep

anguish in the persona's heart. He finds his time to be out of joint, "The time has not come true, the words have not been rightly set" (*Gitanjali*, p. 8). But he blames his own self for the meeting is not taking place: "...but the lamp has not been lit and I cannot ask him into my house" (pp. 8-9). The persona does not have sufficient cause to be hopeful, "I live in the hope of meeting with him; but this meeting is not yet" (p. 9), as the fault lies with the persona (he has been slack in lighting in the lamp in the house to invite his deity, and there is no hope of His arrival till the lamp is lit). Tagore believes that deliverance cannot be had if a person keeps himself aloof and sits in a lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut" (*Gitanjali*, p. 7). The persona in Song XI wants such a man to "come down on the dusty soil" (p. 7) and work with others to live in harmony. The poet does not like the idea of meditation in seclusion and keeping the company of "flowers and incense" (p, 7). He wants such alienated people to come and work with tillers and pathmakers. For him it is better to put on tattered clothes and be in a company of human beings than to be dressed in a sophisticated manner and be in the company of inanimate objects.

But this discussion should not lead one to the inference that Tagore's persona is always an alienated person and goes on sighing and crying. There are a large number of poems in which the speaker succeeds in meeting the master or the beloved. Likewise, there are poems in which he becomes one with the community to which he belongs. In other words, Tagore treats both the themes—alienation and affiliation—in his poems. In some opening poems of the book we have an affiliated persona, then appears an alienated persona in a large number of poems and then the alienated persona again becomes an affiliated one.

For instance, in the first song of the book the persona calls himself a "frail vessel" and finds the Lord to be infinite but he is thankful to the Lord for His having filled him again and again, for His immortal touch and infinite gifts. Likewise, in the second song the persona is thankful to the Lord for His having asked him (the persona) to sing. In song number three the persona is amazed at the master's songs as he finds them illumining the world, running from sky to sky and breaking all obstacles but himself not being able even to sing. The persona is at the stage when an inferior person resolves to emulate a

superior one. The resolution becomes explicit in the fourth song in which the persona resolves to keep his body pure, to keep untruth out of his thoughts and to drive all evils away from the heart.

The persona in song[15], feels alienated as his life is meaningless and purposeless. He has been given a corner seat in the chamber. He feels so insecure that he wants to sing to his deity at the midnight hour when darkness has enwrapped the temple. The persona has a strong desire to be streamlined to fit in the society. This is evident from his prayer, "When in the morning air the golden harp is turned, honour me, commanding my presence" (*Gitanjali*, p. 9). The feeling of alienation and socialization is conveyed here through dark midnight and the desire to be honoured in the morning hours.

The persona of the 16th song feels happy to know that he has not been secluded as he has been invited "to this world's festival" (*Gitanjali*, p. 10). He considers this happening in the form of ending of alienation to be "blessed". Tagore regards this alienation from world as a hurdle in the way to God. In this song the persona starts hoping for the union with the supreme as he is no more alienated. Thus, if a person goes on chanting mantras in seclusion he is not going to meet God. Tagore wants people to work hard in the company of others to meet God. Thus according to him God cannot be approached by an alienated person. In the thirty-seventh song the persona admits that the lord is helping him even at the moment when he hopes for no help at all, and it is this help that makes new melodies break forth from the heart when old words die out on the tongue.

The master too comes to the singer in several poems. For instance, he does in the 49th poem and brings a flower for a prize. In poem number fifty the master who is a king comes in a golden chariot and gives the beggar as much gold as he gets grain from him. In the 51st poem the king comes in a vehicle the wheels of which make a sound to signify his coming and the personas waiting for him find themselves unprepared to receive him. In poem number 56 the lord of all heavens not only comes to the devotee but also makes him a partner of all wealth; nay, the master has made the servant too, master and the two become one.

In the 44th song the beloved is still waiting for the lover, but

she is happy and is singing as she finds the air filling with the perfume of promise. Likewise, in the 45th poem the persona is happy to find that the lover is all the time coming. In the 46th poem too the beloved feels "in the air a faint smell of (his) sweet presence. In song number 48 the lover comes to the beloved and floods her sleep with his smile. The joy which the persona feels at the occasion finds expression in poem number fifty-seven in which he finds light everywhere and exclaims :

> Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light !
>
> Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth. (*Gitanjali*, pp. 37-38)

This light has brought with it mirth, gladness and joy. The persona in the 58th poem wishes it to mingle in his song and in poem number 59 he defines this light as God's love. This joy finds expression in poems number 60, 61, 62 and 63. In poem number 63 the persona asserts that all are one when he says : "when one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of one in the play of many" (*Gitanjali*, p. 42). The persona in poem number 67 asserts that even the living and the non-living are one when he says : "Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well"[15] (*Gitanjali*, p. 45). The persona of poem number 69 makes this assertion even more explicitly when he says : "The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures" (*Gitanjali*, p. 46).

Alienation from the self is removed in song number fifty-two in which the visitor leaves a sword for the persona to cut asunder his/her bonds and the persona declares : "Lord of my heart. no more shall there be for me waiting and weeping in corners, no more coyness and sweetness of demeanour" (*Gitanjali*, p. 34). The implication is that bonds are the cause of all fear and grief and the moment they are cut asunder, alienation from the self comes to its end. In the 53rd poem the persona expresses his happiness on having received the sword. In poem number 55

languor and slumber have been described as the causes of deprivation and in its last line effort has been described as a remedy. It is actually faith in God that solves all the problems. The fact becomes evident when we study Tagore's 81st poem where the persona realizes that God does what is left undone by man. The persona says : "On many an idle day have I grieved over lost time. But it is never lost, my lord. Thou hast taken every moment of my life in thine own hands" (*Gitanjali*, p. 54). And that is the reason why the persona even welcomes death in all the poems numbering 90 onwards.[16] The fact is that the book opens with the birth, moves on through various incidents in life and ends with death. Alienation is a theme treated in the poems dealing with the periods of adoloscence and early youth. There is no alienation in the poems in which late youth, old age and death have been treated. The poet wishes to put alienation to an end in Song XL. He conveys this message through the imagery of seasons. Alienation has been caused by the lack of personal affinity and humanistic values. The persona, as a result, feels his heart to be barren and dry. He is so eager to put alienation to an end that he would prefer dying to leading this miserable sort of life.

> Send thy angry storm, dark with death, if it is thy wish and with lashes of lightening startle the sky from end to end.
>
> But call back, my lord, call back this pervading silent heat, still keen and cruel, burning the heart with dire despair. (*Gitanjali*, p. 23)

Tagore considers those who try to socialize the alienated, worthy of worship. The only quality such a person should have is humility. In Song X, the deity is trying to socialize the alienated ones by keeping company with them. But the persona regards himself as an elite by disassociating himself from the group : "My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost" (*Gitanjali*, p. 6). The persona finds himself alienated because of his pride : "Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost" (*Gitanjali*, p. 6).

Song XII is about the quest of identity. The persoa makes an arduous search to associate himself with something external. He moves on to "many a star and planet" (*Gitanjali*, p. 7), and also "through the wilderness of worlds" (p. 7). The persona is is disgusted with the journey as the time it takes is long and the way of it long" (p. 7). The persona feels that association with self (in contrast to alienation from self) is a very complex and difficult process. He is able to establish a rapport with his own self when he "has to knock at every alien door to come to his own" (*Gitanjali*. p. 8). The realization of self becomes all the more difficult as "one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end" (p. 8). A person will be all troubled till the time he is not able to realize his own self and gets" the flood of assurance "I am !" (p. 8). The persona of this song becomes disgusted with the world around him and ultimately is alienated from it. This results in an arduous search of his "self" which he is able to indentify at last.

There are also songs in which the persona identifies himself with the community to which he belongs, especially his countrymen and, more especially, with the downtrodden and thinks of reshaping his country in a manner that nobody remains deprived and downtrodden. This is the stage at which this persona has been cured of the disease of alienation altogether and has identified his 'I' with 'They' and their joys and sorrows have become his. Such a thing happens in his poems numbering 35 and 36.

Song XXXVI is an expression of the will of shedding of the life of alienation led by a single individual; while song XXXV is a wish of the shedding of the life of alienation led by groups of people or society as such. The several factors, lack of which causes alienation, as also mentioned in the earlier songs are :

(i) the strength to bear joys and sorrows (stoicism)
(ii) the strength to love humanity
(iii) the strength lo fight injustice which manifests itself in the form of poverty or in the form of the use of force,
(iv) the strength to raise the level of mind above trivial things and resignation.

Factors which cause alienation in groups[17] are :

(i) the lack of freedom to think and self-respect
(ii) the lack of free knowledge
(iii) the lack of the sense of वसधैव कुटुम्बकम् (affinity) with all irrespective of caste and creed)
(iv) the lack of the realization of truth
(v) the lack of dignity and the love of labour.
(vi) the lack of reason in sticking to superstitious practices etc
(vii) lack of constant striving for new vistas of thinking and action

Let me conclude the discussion by quoting Alexander Senkevich who writes referring to Tagore's "Change of Epochs" (July, 1933) : "Tagore sees the dehumanisation of these values as the result of the process of man's all-round alienation which is taking place in capitalist society.... These thoughts are repeated with still greater decisiveness in Tagore's address entitled 'To the Conscience of Humanity.' A harmonious development of the individual is the cherished and inaccessible (under the circumstances) goal to which Tagore... (aspires)".[18]

REFERENCES

1. He bereaved the death of his wife in *Samarna* (*In Remembrance*) written within two days of her death.
2. *Crescent Moon* was written in the memory of his youngest son.
3. "Actually, I would like to see some alienation among Indo-English writers. However, undesirable from moral, social and other points of view, it has been aesthetically very productive provided it is genuine. You can't pretend, you can't play the game of alienation. If you are genuinely alienated...and feel you are hostile towards others and they are hostile to you, you hate their guts and they hate yours; this can produce great literature..." Nissim Ezekiel, Interview with Akumal Ramchander, *Deccan Herald Weekly Magazine*, November 12, 1978, p. 2.
4. My assertion is based on what his son Rathi says in *Rabindranath Tagore: On the Edges of Time* (Longmans Green, 1958): "Vicissitudes of life, pain or application never upset the equanimity of my father's mind. His inward peace was not disturbed by any calamity, however painful. Some superhuman *Sakti* (Spiritual energy) gave him power...to rise above misfortunes." p. 65.

5. Rabindranath Tagore, *Reminiscences* (Macmillan, 1917) p. 212.
6. "Three alienation syndromes have been identified. They are quite distinct, though all include traits that make a person disliked by others. The first, known as the 'recessive' alienation syndrome, is characterized by reserved, listless, and withdrawn behaviour (sic). The second, called the 'socially disinterested' alienation syndrome, is that of a self-bound person concerned primarily with his own interests and welfare. People with the third kind of alienation syndrome, the 'socially ineffective', cause trouble for others by being noisy, boistrous show-offs, by resisting authority and ignoring rules, regulations, or even laws, and by rejecting the accepted cultural mores regarding behaviour, speech and dress.

   In general, the alienation is marked by such unsocial behaviour as teasing and bullying, making unpleasant comments, being hypercritical, intentionally annoying people, lying and being sneaky,rising alibis or projecting blame on others, and being sullen, sulky and moody. People characterized by thc socially ineffective syndrome are annoying to others, while those characterized by the recessive and socially disinterested are so distasteful that others have no desire to have anything to do with them." Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Personality Development*, [New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Pub. Co. Ltd , rpt. 1983 (1976),] p. 41.

7. (a) Existentialist philosophers like Kierkegaard and Sartre have emphasized the painful estrangement of man from God, from his fellow men or from himself while using this term. The individual according to Conger may feel that he has lost touch with some inner core of being, and that much of what he does is empty, flat and devoid of meaning. Even despair, apathy and defeat without meaningful substitute can result in alienation. *International Encyclopedia of Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Neurology*, ed. Benjamin B. Wolman, Vol. I (New York : Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1977), pp. 424-426.

   (b) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (1977), gives the following varients of alienation :

   (i) powerlessness, (ii) meaninglessness, (iii) normlessness, (iv) cultural estrangement, (v) social isolation, (vi) self-estrangement, p. 574.

8. "The worldly condition of an alien results from his 'Severed self'. At no time is the alien wholly imbued with the situation he is in. The longing for a unification with the 'roots' for a merger in his ontological foundation, for a kind of home-coming, is the perennial mood of the alien." "Alienation, Anxiety and Recovery: A Study of Indian Metaphysics", Ramakant A. Sinari, *Sociological Abstracts*, August 1986, 34/3 Suppl. 141, p. 136.

9. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, ed. W. B. Yeats [(Madras: Macmillan, 1979 (1913)], p. 5. All subsequent references to the book refer to this edition.

10. Cf. "Nor bird would sing nor lamb would bleat,/Nor my cloud would cross the vault", *Poems of Tennyson* ed. Christopher Ricks(London : Longmans, 1969), p. 364.
11. Ibid. p. 433.
12. Such things are shown happening in their devotional versesby the Hindi poets Kabir and Vidyapati. For instances, Kabir writes :

    aankhariyan jhaain paree pantha nihaar nihaar.
    Jeehariya chhala paraa naam pukaar pukaar.

    (My eyes have becomc misty by staring at the path and my tongue has become blistered by pronouncing his name repeatedly for a long time).
13. Cf. the opening verse of Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* :

    मेघैर्मेदुरमंबुर्म वनभुवस्यामास्तमाला द्रुमैः ।
    नवतं भीरु रयं त्वमेव तदिमं राधे गृहं प्रापय ॥
    इत्थं नंद निदेशितश्चलितयोः प्रत्यध्वकुंजद्रुमम् ।
    राधामाधवयोर्जयन्ति यमुनाकूले रहः केलयः ॥
14. Tagore's quest for spirituality remained unsatiated throughout his life and he could not realize his own self. He dicated twelve days before his death :

    The first days' Sun
    asked
    at the new manifestation of being—
    Who are you ?
    No answer came
    Year after Year went by,
    the last Sun of the day
    the last question utters
    on the western sea shore
    in the silent evening—
    Who are you ?
    He gets no answer.

    (Poems, tr. Amiya Chakravarty, Calcutta : Visva-Bharti, 1942) Thus, Tagore could never reconcile to and est ablish himself in the system and died alienated.
15. This view occurs in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (III, i) where Varuna tells his son: "Seek to know that from which all these things take birth, that by which they live after being born, that towards which they proceed and into which they merge: that is Brahman." (*Brahma-Sutra Bhasya of Sankaracharya*, trans. Swami Gambhiranand (Calcutta : Advaita Ashram, 1972), p. 17.
16. What he says is in agreement with the view of Varuna given in the *Taittiriya Upanishad.* The view also finds representation in William Wordsworth's poem 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality' where he described God as "our home",

17. Individuals are the units of a society hence some of these factors may be in the form of, a sort of, duplication and interpenetrating.

18. Alexander Senkevich, 'Rabindranath Tagore and India's "New Poetry", *Soviet Land*, Vol. XXXIX, November 1986, No. 22. (New Delhi : USSR Embassy), p. 43.

Naresh Chandra

IMAGERY IN TAGORE'S POETRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *GITANJALI*

Most studies of imagery in poetry, be they of any poet whoso-ever, follow the statistical method, and make much of the frequency with which a particular image recurs. I feel that if students of imagery persist in that, such studies will soon be snatched—or are they already being snatched as I am talking to you ?—by the computer from human hands. Moreover, such studies tell more about the character and personality of the poet than about the poem. My purpose is not to make revelation about the character and personality of Tagore, but to focus attention on his poetry, and so I have adopted a different approach ; and since this approach is an indirect one, I should like first to lay down the sequence of argument and exposition lest I appear to be talking of extraneaous subjects.

I have found by experience that the concept of the nature and function of the poetic image, in spite of learned expositions by scholars like Carpenter [1], Jennings[2], Richards[2], Spurgeon[4], Hornstein[5], C.D. Lewis[6], Cleanth Brooks[7], Fogle[8], Stauffer[9], Frank Kermode[10], J.W. Beach[11], and others, is not clear to the average student of poetry ; and so at the outset I make an attempt to explain the nature and function of the poetic image, and in doing so I do not merely rehash what has already been said, but incorporate some of my own perceptions.

Then I proceed to argue that although imagery is the most important single item in poetry, it is more important in mystical poetry than in other poetry which lays no claim to such profundity, the reason being that since the mystic talks about his very

esoteric experience and realisation, he has per force to talk in similitudes, which generate images. St. John's apocalyptic vision is not the lot of every man to see and so St. John must be forced to make the image the medium of his communication.

This leads me to probe into the factors and reasons which incline mysticsm to remain in the twilight of unreason and even invent devices and rituals which would create an atmosphere in which ordinary language of factual statements would not prevail, and all would be images and symbols. It is only after clearing the ground on these points that I enter upon the study of the use of images by Tagore in his poetry and discover according to my lights some of its distinguishing characteristics.

I

I must now make the preliminaries as clear as I can. First, then, what is a poetic image. To be more thorough, let us drop the appellation 'poetic' and inquire: what is an image ? An image may be defined as a "reproduction. in the mind of a sensation produced by physical perception."[12] In literature and poetry, however, the place of actual physical perception is supplied by certain potentialities of language to preserve in it the perceptions of the race over long ages. Through language is available to the poet not only his own perception but the perceptions of the whole race in its sojourne of civilization. In a language, almost every word in its ultimate origin can be traced back to a perceptual experience and an image. The poet does draw upon his personal experiences and perceptions, but he is also the inheritor of the experiences and perceptions of the past which play their role in the creation of poetic images. Perceptions, whether they be of the poet himself, or those of his forerunners available to him through the mediacy of language, provide the material for the formation of images. But ideas are also formed from the same material. What is the difference ? To grasp this difference is something vital to the understanding of the nature of the image, and the difference is that while the idea or concept makes its impact on the intelligence and understanding, the image is dumb to the intellect and speaks to the senses alone. The word 'dumb' might have reminded you of the lines in Archibald Macleish's famous poem, 'ArsPoetica' where in the middle of the poem he says that a poem must be

Dumb

As old medalions to the thumb.

It is anybody's experience that while fumbling for small coins in the pocket, one feels the rim whether it is dented or has a waving outline. The image of the coin that forms by the sensation of the touch is dumb to the intellect, but it conveys its message to the imagination through a perceptual sense. Any description or simile or metaphor or other form of similitude, no matter how colourful or pictorial, will not be accepted as a poetic image if it addresses itself to the intellect. It becomes a poetic image only when the intellect is completely kept out and is not allowed any share in the response. That is ideal condition, of course, but in actual practice a poetic image will have its validity in proportion to the extent to which it excludes the intellect from having any share in its response.

Secondly, a poetic image does not require the reader to go through the actual physical experience of perception which the poet might have gone through in its formation. I say 'might have' because even for the poet the physical experience of perception is not necessary. I have said before that the accumulated perceptual experience of the race is available to the poet through the language which is the great repository of images of all kinds. I wonder whether Yeats meant this when in his 'Second Coming' he alluded to 'an image' proceeding from 'Spiritus Mundi'. This use of language may be directly descriptive, or may employ any of the devices of similitude, but the equation in the similitude must be self-evident and must not need to be pointed out. I shall show in this paper that Tagore's use of imagery in poetry is distinguished from many other poets who have used the device of similitude in its self-evidentness. In his use of poetic imagery, he never finds himself under the necessity of labouring to bring out the similitude as Arnold, for example finds himself in a poem like 'Dover Beach'; in which the effect of imagery which he has built up through the opening stanza, is all spoilt as soon as he begins to expound the symbolism of that imagery :

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round the earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, ...

If a pictorial description, or any form of similitude requires an explanation or elaboration of its implication, it is not a poetic image.

Third, the description or similitude or allusion intended as a poetic image, should be capable of evoking a sensation in the reader, and the sensation should be strong enough to project on the screen of the imagination a vivid picture of the object, situation, action or character of which the poet had actual experience, or which he discovered in the great store-house of images that language is. The point here is that this store-house of images, i.e. language is available to both the poet and the reader, if they belong to the same cultural tradition, only the poet is more sensitive to the pictorial value of different items in it. It is like an exhibition of paintings particularly of modern art, in which in a particular picture one viewer sees merely a splash of colour or an intricate arrangement of lines and curves, but another viewer finds in it an artistic expression and a profound message, a message which probably could not have been conveyed by conventional modes of painting. So in language there are images visible to every one, and images visible only to the inspired and initiated, which the poet claims to be. The poet can claim to have created a poetic image only when he can make the reader experience in his imagination the actual experience of physical perception which he himself had, or can make him see the pictorial significance of any particular item in the great exhibition of language. I may make one qualification here that the poetic image need not always be one of beauty and joy : it may be ugly and even dreadful as much of the imagery of Spenser, Milton, Shelley, Swinburne actually is beautiful and joyous, or ugly and dreadful, the poetic image has its function in poetry and that is one of sudden illumination of a theme, a situation, a recondite or obscure idea.

Wordy evocation of a sensuous, realistic perception, capable of bodying itself forth into a picture projected on the screen of the imagination, illuminating with a flash of revelation something obscure or difficult of mere rational grasp ....What else ? In addition to its sensuousness, it should also be capable of involving the reader emotionally, or to put it more simply, it should work up an identical or similar emotion in the reader to the one which the poet had originally experienced. If an image possesses all other qualities mentioned above—power of evoking peception or

experience, verisimilitude, sensuousness, illumination, but is not capable of involving the reader in the emotional state of the poet, it will not be a poetic image. [13] Cecil Day Lewis produces one or two illustrative examples which we may repeat here. A manufacturer of woollen blankets advertises his ware :

A Midsummer Night's Dream of lightness
A Winter's Tale of warmth.

Here the language gives only the illusion of being sensuous, but actually it is not. With the titles of two plays of Shakespeare brought in, which have only a wordy link with the subject intended to be sensuously evoked, it becomes a conceit and comes nowhere near the concept of poetic image. No dominant sensuous experience of the reader is evoked. So the fourth point about the poetic image is its potentiality to involve the reader in the emotional state of the poet.

Cecil Day Lewis's own definition of poetic image as "a picture made out of words", and Fogle's identification of the poetic image as "the sensuous element in poetry"[14], to my mind miss a great deal which I should like to include in the concept. Even Caroline Spurgeon's averred compulsion to use the term image "as the only available word to cover every kind of simile, as well as every kind of what is simply compresed simile—metaphor"[15] does not justify itself, because every simile and every metaphor may not be evocative of a poetic image. Moreover, the reduction of the status of the 'metaphor' to that of a mere, compressed simile, does injustice to metaphor. There is more in the metaphor than a mere compressed simile, and I hope to demonstrate that in bringing out the peculiar distinction of Tagore's poetic images, particularly in *Gitanjali.*

Similes, despite all their cleverness, aptness and picture sequences, may not always evoke a poetic image. For example :

As tactless as a full length mirror.

Even direct sensuous descriptions containing a metaphor within them may also miss the effect of a poetic image. For example :

Elephants dressed in their perpetually wrinkled gray suits.

or

Switzerland's spotless manicured countryside.

or even

A gazelle fleeing on dainty ballet hooves.[16]

The very factuality of these phrases takes away from them that which constitutes the essence of the poetic image, and that is an evoked and active positive contribution from the imagination of the reader. Every poetic image has a special import for every different reader of poetry, and this special import is of the making of the reader himself more than of the poet. A poetic image is not a determined and static entity. It is in the nature of a stimulus proceeding from the poet, which has to be appropriated himself by every reader by bringing into play his own sensuous and imaginative faculties. An image for its actual poetic effect is what it evokes in the reader. An image which is definitely tactile to one reader may be equally definitely visual to another.

Poetic image has to fiulfil one more requirement. It has to be structured into the dominant theme of the poem in which it occurs. An image, no matter how sensuous, beautiful or startlingly new, is worth nothing much poetically unless it illumines some aspect of the theme of the poem, and unless it fits into the pattern formed by other images occurring in the same poem. It has to become so structured that it does not merely remain an icing on the cake but becomes the substance of it.

II

I can leave out other matters pertaining to the poetic image such as its division into types according to the faculty from which it proceeds and to which it appeals—perceptual and conceptual—and their sub-divisions according to the different organs of perception—visual, aural, tactile, olfactory, gestatory andkinesthetic—but according to my lights it is very important to dwell in some detail on the vital relationship between imagery and mysticism, a subject I hinted at in my preliminary remarks. Tagore is a mystical poet, and imagery has special significance in mystical poetry because the mystic poet's visions being not of this world have to be translated for the common man not gifted with the mystic vision into familiar images of worldy things. The mystic's

vision has been illumined with a light that never was on earth or seat. He has seen in his trance things of which the common run of man has no experience, and, therefore, the mystic has to talk in similitudes, alluding to things unseen in terms of things seen. It is not merely his gift of vision which makes him different from common people; his attitude is also something peculiar. Matter-of-factness of discourse and clarity of terms of expression is what he shuns. He has reached Reality, in his own conviction at least, through the way of Un–reason, and, therefore he fears that too close contact with reason may make the spell evaporate away. What may appear insanity to others is an inspired spiritual state to him, and, therefore even for the comunication of the message to the common people he would not condescend to a mundane sanity. In the Western mystical tradition which is sometimes traced back to Plato, the very foundation of whose philosophy is laid on shadows or images, assumes that reality is apprehended through images. There is no getting away from them although we knew that they are not reality, because Reality has made itself manifest through them. With St. Paul's "O Altitudu", Christian mystics have loved to lose themselves in the inscrutable mystery of things divine. The prototype of the idiom and style of mystical writing for the West was provided by Pseudo-Dionysius in third century A.D., and not only Western writers but even Indian writers who might swear by the Upanishads and Gita, adopt the same style, particularly when they write in English. And the very opening sentence of Dionysius's *Mystical Theology* will give some idea of the idiom and style of mystical writing, and reluctance of the mystic to come out of the twilight of un-reason into the open light of reason :

> O Trinity, Supreme Essential and Super Divine and Super Essential, Ephor and Guardian of the Theosophy of the Christians, guide me to be Super-Incomprehensible.

The original can also be translated as 'Supreme Incomprehensibility'. The mystic does not seek his way to the comprehensible; he does not seek the light of comprehensibility, but loves to confound his understanding before the inscrutable mystery of that which passes all bounds of rational comprehensibility. The nearest that Hermes Termagistus could come to the notion of God

was "a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere"; and Tertutilian put the impertinent meddlings of reason in matters of faith at rest with his pronouncement : *Certum est quia impossible est :* only that is certain which is impossible. Sir Thomas Browne provides in English the best example among those who have set out on the quest of truth in the mystical way :

> Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in Religion for an active faith ... I love to lose myself in a mystery to pursue my reason to an O Altitudo.[18]

For a mystic the definition of Light as *Lux est unbra Dei* (Light is the darkness of God, or What is darkness to God is light to men) than the Newtonian definition as *Actus perspicuii* (the active principle of perception or seeing). Mysticism does not seek rational clarity of perception and comprehension, but on the contary it believes in confounding these faculties in the faith that truth is seen better in the twilight of tranced unreason than in the clear light sanity of reason.

This obtains not only in the Western mystical tradition but in all systems of mysticism world over of which ten are most prominent—Confucianism in China (Cung-Fu-Tzu); Brahmanism in India; Orhhism; Pythogoreanism and Platonism in Ancient Greece; Neo-platonism in ancint Mediterranean region and Renaissance Europe; Dionysiunism in ancient Syria; Manichaism and Sufism in Persia; Monastic Catholocism in mediaeval Europe; and Puritanism in Seventeenth Century England. Its modern manifestations are seen in Swedenborg in the eighteenth century; and among the mystics of the twentieth century we have to name one Arab and two Indians—Khalil Gibran and Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. Our point from which we deviated to bring in these details was obscurity and irrationality of mysticism which necessitates the use of the image in mystical poetry. This unreason and the deliberate confounding of rationality is the characteristic of all forms of mysticism. I do not feel competent to talk about all forms, but I feel I must draw attention to this aspect of confounding the reason in Brahmanical form.

Mysticism; whether in the East or the West, ancient or modern, is grounded in the belief that it is given to man to establish direct contact with God, and this direct knowledge is possible through certain mysterious rites such as those practised in the Apo-

llonian worship at Delphos, designed to confound reason. The sole purpose of these ritualistic practices was to induce a state of mind in which reason would be drowned in a flood and upsurging of ultra-rational and supra-rational faculties. Man is not compounded of reason alone. Besides reason there are other faculties as well which we have not only not developed, but which we have wilfully suppressed recognising the supremacy of reason, because reason showed the tempting prospect of fulfilling our material demands. The resultant situation is like that of Good Deeds in the famous mediaeval Morality, *Everyman*.Good Deeds can come to the succour of Everyman, but he lies low in the ground chained with the sins of Everyman. The finer perceptions and capabilities of our soul have become inert by our sin of submission to the supremacy of reason, and they can be released from bondage only by certain mysterious ritualistic practices. Mysticism derives its name from this concept. In the beginning it was mysterious ritual practices, later their place was taken by contemplation and meditation; but the purpose remained the same—to drown rationality into a state of ecstasy. This ecstatic state can be produced by various means and one of these is chant or incantation. In the Samhita text of Rg Veda, the most ingenious devices were adopted for the chanting of the mantras out of which emerged four main ways of incantation : Pada Path; Krama Path; Jata Path; and Ghana Path. In Pada Path the words would be recited in the order in which they occur in the verse; in Krama Patha every word would be repeated twice, connecting each word with its preceding and following word, thus, ab bc cd.... xa. In Jata Path (woven text) the combinations of words would become interwoven, thus, ab ba, ab, bc, cb bc.... The last one or Ghana Patha is the climax of most complicated combinations—ab ba, abc, cba, abc, bc, cb, bcd.... From the grammarian's point of view the objective of Pada Patha was to preserve the text in an uncorrupted form, but it is quite obvious that the purpose of other modes of chant must have been to produce an ecstatic state by the sheer sin of sounds in systematic combinations, an ecstatic state which is thought to be essential for mystical realisation and revelation. This proription of the modes of recitation was just another variant of the mystery rituals from which, as pointed out above, mysticism derives its name. As the reciter proceeds to more and more complicated modes of recitation, he

builds an atmosphere of resonance around him in which his reason gradually fades out, making way for the oncoming of the ecstatic state.

I may seem to have lingered too long on the irrationality of mysticism, but actually I have not even touched the fringe of it. The subject is inexhaustible, but whatever little I have said is enough for my purpose, which is to show that imagery is more essential to mystical poetry than to other brands of poetry. The mystic speaks from a sphere which is beyond the reach of reason. He has betaken himself to that region deliberately, not without pains, and when he wants to communicate to men below, be has to translate the language of that region into mundane idiom and finds that the best medium for that translation is the poetic image.

III

I have already dealt with one of the reasons for the predominance of imagery in Tagore's poetry, viz, his mysticism; the second if his faith to which he gives most out-spoken utterance in Lyric 73 of *Gitanjali,* that renunciation would not bring deliverance :

> Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousands bonds of delight.

When God is "ever pouring for me fresh draughts of (His) wine of various colours; and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the full" where is the wisdom of denying to oneself the gifts and blessings of God ? This argument convinces him so well that in the next verse he almost cries out :

> No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.

People call the delights of the senses mere illusion, but Tagore believes :

> Yes, all my illusions will burn into illuminations of joy, and my desires ripen into fruits of love.

To a poet with such convictions about the validity of the senses of perception, imagery was the most natural thing to come thro,

ugh his senses and impregnate his poetry with an amazing fecundity. Think of imagery in Tagore's poetry and you have God's plenty filling and regaling your artistic sensibility. Imagery is the language that he speaks, so much so that sometimes a whole poem is just one continuous image with minor images interwoven in it, like musical notes improvised in a symphony. I shall illustrate this assertion with the analysis of just three poems, each showing one particular aspect to the use of imagery in his poetry. Lyric 41 in *Gitanjali*, is, for instance, one sustained image of a maid waiting with her flower offering by the road side for the Lord to pass in his chariot, and perchance accept her offering. People pass in crowds, and yet He for whom she waits appears not. She becomes the object of derision of others, and her only consolation is that when he would appear in his chariot decorated with pinions and lift her from the dust, how people would wonder, and her shame turn into pride. The entire poem is one sustained image, the source which may be looked for in village fairs, in temple processions, and feudal regalia which Tagore must have seen in his earlier days. Within this all encompassing image are studded other images like precious stones in a piece of jeweller, for example the image of the chariot :

> ...all the lights ablaze, golden pennons flying over thy car, and they at the roadside standing agape....

or the image of the beggar girl herself

> ... a tremble with shame and pride, like a creeper in a summer breeze.

The imagery here does not merely grow out of experience, but it has also been dramatised, so that by the sheer use of imagery which keeps changing but always pivoted upon one figure, the entire story is projected on the scene of our imagination. In the progression of events, it is not only the human procesion that passes on, but "time (also) glides on". "The morning time is past and the noon. In the shade of the evening my eyes are drowsy with sleep". And not dramatisation only ; Tagore is also a musician, and his knowledge of music prompts him to interweave smaller, fleeting images into the central image like improvisations of notes and melodies into the central symphony.

Nor is all this imagery indulged in for its own sake. As pointed out earlier, the image in the hands of a mystical poet is the vehicle of his spiritual message. The beggar girl, it does not have to be pointed out by the poet, is the soul of the devotee waiting for the coming of the Lord. The choice of image is so appropriate, and it has been so deftly worked upon that its message becomes self-evident, even in its minor details—while she waits, "passers-by come and take my flowers" which is simply the symbolic way of saying through imagery that if the Lord delays his coming to the devotee, there is danger of lesser interests of the world making their claim upon him. The message which the poem bears and the image, or, to put it more appropriately, the complex of images harmonised into one, cannot be separated from each other. To obtain this complete identification, Tagore evokes the cultural background of Hindu lore in the reader. I pointed in an earlier section of this paper that an image does not become poetic unless it has the power to evoke something lying dormant in the reader by which he makes his own contribution to complete the significance of the image. What Tagore's imagery in this instance evokes in the reader is his experience (if he is in touch with the folk life) and the spiritual message which every one steeped in Hindu lore carries in his hear.

Just as lyric 41 is one continued image, so lyric no. 42 is an unbroken chain of images. The theme is the lone tryst: "Only thou and I, and never a soul in the world" would sail away into a boat "to no country and no end". This theme is developed with an unbroken chain of ever-changing images. To save space I shall not analyse the poem, but only separate out the images in their succession as they occur in the poem :

1. Sailing out in a boat—an image the source of which lies in everyday life of rural Bengal, and in Hindu lore.
2. The shoreless ocean—again derived from actual experience and the world of symbols, in which ocean stands for eternity.
3. Sitting in the boat "at thy silently listening smile my songs would swell in melodies"—a very delicate image of the poet-musician coming into his own at

the encouragement from an appreciative listener, derived from the cultural background in which Tagore breathed.

4. "Melodies, free as waves, free from all bondage of words"—an image made out of the visual, aural and the conceptual, the conceptual part giving it the colouring of "unified sensibility" of metaphysical poetry.
5. "Lo, the evening has come down upon the shore"—a visual image with obvious symbolic significance, 'shore' and 'evening' being part of Hindu religious lore.
6. "In the fading light the sea birds come flying to their nest"— a detail of the above image of evening and yet an independent image in itself, originating in the close observation of the phenomena of natnre.
7. "Who knows when the chains will be off, and the boat, like the last glimmer of sunset vanish into the night"—a complex image made out of the observation of the folk life of Bengal, and the symbolism of Hindu religion in which the boat stands for the human body, and the chain which tethers it to the shore, for the bonds of life. Here again, as in the last poem analysed above, there is an image within the image based on the simile "like the last glimmers of sunset".

These seven images and their internal corrolaries and their symbolic significance constitute the whole poem ; and if we take out the images, nothing will remain of the poem, because images constitute the language which Tagore speaks.

I have given one instance in which the poem is just one continuous image ; another, which is a continuous unbroken chain of images, and in which images constitute the very substance of the poem. And now I am going to present one instance which illustrates Tagore's mastery in weaving images of quite heterogeneous kind into a pattern. Lyric 48 of *Gitanjali* depicts the journey of life through the imagery of an actual journey :

> The morning sea of silence broke into ripples of bird songs ; and the flowers all merry by the roadside; and

the wealth of gold was scattered through the rift of the clouds...and all this as a backdrop for the start of the journey. The complex limning of the first image achieved through deft use of metaphor—the quiet of the morning broken by the ripples of bird songs compared to a calm sea whose calmness is broken by the sudden playing of waves on its surface. If the first item of the imagery of the backdrop comes from the phenomenon of the sea to which the phenomenon of the morning has been compared, the second item (flowers were all merry by the road side) comes from the earth, and the third (wealth of gold scattered from the rift of the clouds) is taken from the sky. What I mean to point is that there is a system and an order in Tagore's selection of items for his imagery. Another remarkable point is the throwing together of the impressions of different senses. In the first item, for example, the visual (waves on the sea) and aural (ripple of bird songs) have been thrown together, taking advantage, perhaps, of the implications of the word "ripple", and thus exploring and exploiting the resources which language offers for the purpose of imagery, an aspect of the subject to which I drew attention in the very opening section of this paper. This is a dominant quality of Tagore's imagery, and we recognise in it something that is Keatsian. God had given us one composite sense of perception ; it is we who have compartmentalised it, allocating one particular kind of perception to one particular sense organ. The more this compartmentalisation, the more is man removed from his original blessed state. This is what Ruskin alluded to in another context when he ridiculed the idea of 'division of labour' in the sphere of industry. "Have we divided labour" he asked, "or have we compartmentalised man?" To regain our original blessed state we have to abolish the dividing lines between one sense and the other. To the harmonised and composite perception there is light in the music which scatters rays like the sun, and music in the rainbow whose harmony of colours is not merely visual but also aural to the redeemed perception. This is what Tagore actually says in one of his lyrics.

We have no time and space for detailed comments of this kind on every image, and so we shall just enumerate different images which are patterned into the poem before passing on to the next stage of our exposition. The images in their sequence are :

1. "The morning sea of silence broke into ripples of bird songs".
2. The flowers were merry by the roadside.
3. Wealth of gold scattered through the rift in the clouds.
4. The sun rising to the mid sky.
5. Doves cooing in the shade—a visual as well as aural image, with the symbolism of dove for peace thrown in, something conceptual and traditional.
6. Whithered leaves dancing and whirling in the hot air of the noon—something reminiscent of Shelley.
7. The shephered boy dreaming in the shadow of the bunyan tree--reminiscent of Milton and the pastoal tradition at once transferred to the Indian scene by the introduction of the bunyan tree.
8. The traveller laying himself down by the water and stretching his tired limbs on the grass—an image drawn from folk life, with a faint reminiscence of something biblical.
9. The companions laughing at his tardiness, hurrying on and vanishing into the distant blue haze—again folk life and something of the Book of Job.
10. Crossing many meadows and hills, passing through strange far away countries. The last phrase takes the imagination of the reader from the definite and known to the infinite and unknown, with overtones of its wistful symbolism.
11. The repose of the sun—embroidered green gloom—an image in which the observation of nature mingles with the appreciation for human art--embroidered.
12. Maze of shadows and songs--again the device of confounding perceptions of different senses—visual and aural. This, as I pointed out above is an ever-present and haunting quality of Tagore, and, in fact of all poets who are in a quest of the redeemed state of the unification of the senses: "I forgot for what I had travelled, and I surrendered my mind without struggle to the maze of shadows and songs."

'Shadows' belong to the visual, 'songs' to the rural ; but in a state of heightened consciousness the two can mingle to form a hypnotising maze, in the shares of which the traveller (the mystic seeker) surrenders his rational awareness. Actually this is a depiction through imagery of the mystical ritualistic way. Didn't we refer to the chanting of Vedic mantras in different modes till the devotee arrives at Ghana Patha which is devised to drown the rational element in a maze of chant and shadows cast by the worship with lighted lamp (Arati). What I mean to draw attention to is that whatever other qualities Tagore's imagery may possess, one quality is ever present, and present in a dominant form, and that is the image becoming the medium of the religious mysteries of mysticism, because the images are drawn from the Hindu religious tradition in which the wonted items of life such as the journey, the boat, the lover-beloved relationship had for centuries been used as media for communicating religious profundities.

IV

This was merely a foretaste, and a preliminary evidence for some of the claims made in the earlier part of the foregoing section. We come now to some of the fundamental problems connected with the study of imagery of any poet ; and the first of them is the sources of imagery. Every poet draws his images from the objects which have entered into his experience, from the environmental impacts, from the cultural tradition in which he has lived and the lore of that tradition, from the reading of other authors, and from the exploration and exploitation of the resources of language, which, as I said in the opening section of this paper, is a great repository of images. The images drawn from various sources may be classified as perceptual and conceptual and verbal. The images that fall in the category of perceptual are further classified as visual, aural, etc. according to the sense of perception through which they come. Lesser poets with limited sensibility show predilection for some particular senses, but great poets do not only feel at home in the domain of every sense, but confound several of them together attempting a harmonious reintegration. Sometimes perceptual images, particularly tactile, are so realistic in their impact that they produce an actual tautening, or thrill or spasmodic movement in the nerves and the muscles, and then we give them the name of 'kinesthetic'. One special variety of conceptual image which remains at the conceptual level and cannot be translated into

perceptual or neural terms, is called the metaphysical image. Although images of all these kinds are found in Tagore, the dominant quality of Tagore's imagery is that in it the perceptual and the conceptual merge in a way which it will be difficult to match from any other poet. To Tagore, imagery is the medium for communicating the otherwise incommunicable mysteries of the mystic way of life. The image and the idea are of twin birth, I mean twins conceived and delivered simultaneously by the same creative sensibility. To a poet who avowed to keep all his senses open so that the blessings of delight which God pours down upon humanity may freely enter in, perceptual imagery was inevitable. But he did not keep only his senses open, his spirit also had a prodigiously immoderate thirst for the mysteries and truths which not trickled but poured down from empyrean regions hidden from the vulgar sight.

With his senses all open and receptive, his imagination roving everywhere, and his higher susceptibilities always in communion with the empyrean regions of mystery and revelation, Tagore's field of imagery knows on bounds, and I do not know on what grounds is based the charge of monotony and reiteration brought against him. In my ratherin tensive study of Tagore's poems in *Gitanjali* and several collections such as *Fruit-Gathering*, *Lover's Gift*, *Flight of Swans*, and *Fire Flies* and I have been able to identify more than a dozen fields of his imagery. I use the word 'field' advisedly because I have an illuminating comparison in my mind. Just as a magnetic needle passing through a magnetic field reacts by showing deflections of various intensities, so a poetic genius passing through an imagistic field reacts by sensitive recordings. But all imagistic fields are not magnetic for all poetic sensibilities, and the capacity of a poetic genius can be measured by the number of fields to which it is sensitive. From this point of view, Tagore's must have been a superbly sensitive poetic genius, because his fields of imagery are :

1. *Nature and its individual items and ever-changing moods and phenomena :* In a poem in *Fire Flies* he says :

> The world speaks to me in pictures,
> my soul answers in music....[17]

and in another poem of the same collection :

> The first flower that blossomed on this earth
> Was an invitation to the unborn song.[18]

and these should be testimonies enough for Tagore's allegiance to Nature as the domain of imagery. The very origin of poetry is traced to the first flower that blossomed on earth. Not only for beauty is nature taken as the great repository of images, but also in its symbolic gesture to announce man's affiliation to heaven :

> The trees are the earth's endless effort
> to speak to the listening heaven.[19]

It is through the mediacy of the trees that man's soul can communicate with heaven, and, therefore :

> My soul tonight loses itself
> in the silent heart of a tree
> Standing alone among the whispers
> of immensity.[20]

We may recognise a hint of Blake and of Keats in the images of Tagore, but that does in no way detract from Tagore's adherence to nature as an inspiring source of poetic images. Songs No. 5, 6, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 40, 42, 45, 51, 67, to single out only a few out of many, have their imagery based in nature. Imagery from nature is so prevalent in Tagore's poetry that it does not seem necessary to pick out particular instances of it. But I should like to draw attention to one particular aspect of it and that is something of the display of the power of myth-making which we associate with poets like Spenser and Shelley :

> There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth.
>
> And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.[21]

If we understand the modus operandi of myth-making, it is the most natural thing for Tagore to do. In myth-making, a strong imagination first personifies the objects and phenomena of nature,

and then the dramatic faculty in the poet comes into display and assigns roles to these personifications. Tagore possesses all these powers. He has a vivid and creative imagination, a scintillating poetic sensibility and, of course, a practising dramatist. Myth-making about nature came natural to him, but what is remarkable is that the myth that he makes is a thing of superb beauty in itself and appropriate to the theme in hand.

2. *Folk life of rural Bengal :* This is the second source of his imagery in which the most prominent items are the boat, the river or the sea over which it sails, the pedestrian journey on land, the village fair and the village market, temple processions with all their regalia with occasional glimpses of mediaeval feudal glory in them. As Macalulay says of Dante, "Even in his wildest flights his imagination was always based on things seen, and specially in his own dear Italy," so may one say of Tagore's imagination with the substitution of the word Bengal for Italy. This imagery is also so much in evidence that it does not seem necessary to pick out particular inatances of it. I my however name some poems. Nos. 8, 11, 17, 21, 23, 44, 51, 64 in *Gitanjali* have their imagery drawn from this source.

3. Quite a good deal of Tagore's imagery comes from the ways, customs and culture of mediaeval feudal life, which had lingered on, particularly in Bengal, long enough for Tagore to have got more than a glimpse of them. Tagore's fascination with feudal life may at first seem something contrary to the modernist and progressive leanings of his mind; but when we recall that he was a mystic whose mysticism was steeped in Hindu religious lore, this seeming contradiction is soon resolved, because the backdrop of Hindu religious lore is all feudal. For this reason also there was a reason. Indian mysticism, though having its roots in Vedantic and Upnishadic philosophy, had its second upsurge in mediaeval feudal times, and Indian mystics conceived the empyrean court on the analogy of the feudal courts which they were accustomed to seeing. I have already drawn attention to this element in Tagore's imagery while analysing Lyric No. 41 of *Gitanjali.* Other poems in which this imagery appear are Nos. 15, 16, 28, 29, 41, 50, 51, 53, 100. In lyric 15, for instance, the setting of the mead hall with the minstrel is feudal :

> I am here to sing thee songs. In this hall of thine I have a corner seat.

> In thy world I have no work to do; my useless life can only break out in tunes without a purpose.

Isn't it reminiscent of the mediaeval bards in a feudal setting? To me it is a reminder of the Troubadour tradition of mediaeval Europe, or earlier still, of the atmosphere that breaths in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

4. Tagore draws much of his imagery from his legacy fo mythical and doctrinal lore of Hinduism. This is a pervasive element, and even if an image is not drawn from this source, its symbolic significance derives from it. We have had sufficient instances of it in other contexts, and so here I shall refer to certain poems in which this element is dominant like lyrics No. 1, 7, 11, 20, 24. This imagery is almost always used to illumine mysteries of the mystic ways. In the mystic quest it often happens that the illumination comes but the mystic seeker is so lost in the quest that he does not know it. How can this mystery be voiced except through the medium of imagery, and that imagery too drawn from Hindu lore :

> On the day when the lotus bloomed, alas, my mind was straying, and I knew it not. My basket was empty and the flower remained unheeded.[22]

5. The fifth field from which Tagore's imagery is drawn is that of the cultural life in which he breathed and in which music and theatricals were the dominant elements. Some of the instances are to be found in lyrics Nos. 13, 69, 70 and 96 of *Gitanjali*. The theme of No. 97 for example, is leaving the world with no regrets, because "what I have seen is unsurpassable." This world is not mere illusion, or a place of temptations, but a medium through which we can see and touch the Invisible and the Impalpable :

> In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play and have I caught sight of him that is formless.

The use of the image and symbol of the stage for life is not new. We are familiar with it in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, but the interpretation and attitude in the above-quoted lines are strikingly new. To Tagore life is not merely "a walking shadow, a poor player/

that struts and frets his hour upon the stage." He does recognise that life is a play, but it is through this play that he realises the ultimate mystery. Tagore must have known from experience as a playwright and actor that the meaning of this inscrutable story of life cannot be realised without getting an opportunity to act a role in it. Of course, his familiarity with the doctine of Maya–Leela–Moksha is to be taken for granted. There cannot be Moksha without passing through Maya and Leela.

Imagery from music in Tagore is quite as haunting and effective as imagery from the stage :

> The song that I came to sing remains unsung to this day. I have spent my days in stringing and in unstringing my instrument.

The image of stringing and unstringing of the instrument by the musician to bring it in tune for the melody to be performed is so familiar and yet so appropriate and effective.

6. Quite a good deal of Tagore's imagery is not grounded in earthly things but draws inspiration from cosmic entities; and in the formation of it, perception and imagination have as much a role as conception and inspired faith. Lyrics 12, 22, 43, 67, and 68 furnish some of the instances.

> I came out of the chariot of the first gleam of light, and pursued my voyage through the wilderness of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet.[23]

This imagery has been employed to mark the journey of the soul through time and space :

> The traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end.

In such an instance it has particularly to be noticed how the purely conceptual image of the "outer worlds" has been linked with the most mundane and familiar "every alien door", showing Tagore's equal familiarity with the mundane and the cosmic. A very happy conceit out of cosmic imagery has been created in Lyric 68. The theme is that if the mystic seeks God, God is no less eager to send out his messengers to him to draw him to himself :

> Thy sunbeam upon this earth of mine with arms outstretched and stands at my door the livelong day to carry back to thy feet clouds made of my tears and sighs and songs.

These clouds of tears and sighs and songs make a mantle of rainbow colours, which thou art glad to wrap "about thy starry breast...turning it into numberless shapes and folds and colouring it with hues everchanging." Again what is to be noticed is the comingling of familiar and mundane with the cosmic and unearthly. The folds and shapes of the mantle obviously come from a most familiar article in Bengali dress, and the rest from the boldest imagination playing with the most inscrutable entities of the cosmos.

To save space for some significant observation about Tagore's imagery, I think I should simply enumerate the other fields without caring to produce illustrations or giving other details. We covered upto number 6, and the seventh source which furnishes forth some of his most tantalising images is the domain of the secrets of the poetic art which are known to the poet alone. Lyrics 42, 43, 49 may be studied for this purpose.

8. The lore of love and the lover beloved relationship and its innumerable shades of longing and lamenting, the pleasurable pain of waiting, trysting and meeting. Lyrics Nos. 7, 26, 64 may be looked into.

9. The life of the road and adventures of the journey. See Lyrics Nos. 12, 42.

10. Imagery drawn from the din of an industrial town. There is at least one instance in lyric 30.

11. Imagery of draught and infertility. The mind at once goes to Eliot's *The Waste Land*, but not caring to stop to inquire about influences, I simply refer to lyrics 39, 40.

12. The realm of concepts, most of which come from Hindu philosophy and mythology :

> But more beautiful to me thy sword with its curve of lightning like the outspread wings of the divine bird of Vishnu, perfectly poised in the angry red light of the sunset.

> It quivers like the one last response of life in ecstasy of pain at the final stroke of death; it shines like the pure flame of being burning up earthly sense with one fierce flash.[24]

In such instances the metaphor which is the wonted vehicle of Tagore has per force to be changed to simile because both sides of the equation are unseen—what is to be pictured forth and the entities in terms of which it is to be imaged. Other instances of this kind of imagery are to be found in lyrics 53, 82, 84.

13. This conceptual image when it occurs in a state of unification of conception wlth perception, idea with sensation assumes the aspect of metaphysical image.

14. Imagery which draws at once upon several resources and comes to have an ambivalence, which is something akin to that of the French Symbolists. What the French Symbolists did in the later half of the nineteenth century was to give a vague and ambiguous connotation to their imagery, so that readers found itself roving between many tantalising interpretations. We find it difficult to understand why this had such a tremendous impact on the French mind because the English poetic tradition in which we have educated our poetic sensibilities, had never been schooled to be exact and precise under the impact of classicism as the French poetic tradition had been; and English Romantics, particularly the younger ones had always been doing this kind of thing. However, leaving aside this question of the over-estimation of the impact of the French Symbolist movement, what we have to notice is that Tagore also achieves ambivalence in his imagery (whether under the influence of the English Romantics, of French Symbolists, or out of his own bent of mind). Sometimes his images are difficult of exact interpretion : Thus the image of the sword in Lyric 52. The lover (Deity) has come to the devotee in the darkness of the night, with a rose wreath round his neck, which the devotee wished to beg but dared not. And in the morning, what does she find ?

> It is thy mighty sword, flashing as a flame, heavy as a bolt on thunder.... I sit and muse in wonder, what gift is this of thine ?

So does the reader. What does the image of the sword signify ? The only hint given is that with it I can cut the bonds. Is it death then ? or is it knowledge, the dawning, of which in the mind frees man from all bonds ? or is it love of God, or fear of God, one fear that frees man from all fears ?

V

There is much else that can be said about the wide range of imagery and the variety of uses which Tagore puts it to. The reason why I want so much into details of the sources of imagery in Tagore was that I wanted to counter the charge of reiteration and monotony which has been brought against him. What necessity for a poet to be reiterative or monotonous who has such a wide range and variety of sources for his imagery ? I think that those who bring forth this charge betray their own superficial acquaintance with Tagore's poetry. The instances I have produced should be enough to convince any one that Tagore's imagery has a wide range, often a quality to startle the reader by its orginality and boldness, and what is more, it is not only well harmonised into the theme of the poem but the very substance of it. As I said earlier, take away the imagery from any of his poems and practically nothing remains.

This is a matter of controversy in which, I believe, all the evidence is on my side. Some images might have been repeated, such as the image of the boat, or of the journey, but there is plenty to compensate it; and as for monotony, I found no evidence for it in my repeated readings of the poems. Leaving this controversial issue aside, I come to a few remarkable things about the imagery of Tagore, which probably have not been noticed before by scholars, and upon which I stumbled just by chance during the preparation of this paper. The first remarkable thing is that the imagery in all the mystical poems in *Gitanjali* are metaphor oriented, while secular poems in this very collection and others named above which I have scrutinized have an imagery which is simile based. One distinction has to be made. Even in mystical or spiritual poems the imagery of the main poem is metaphorical, but if there is an occasion for bringing an image within this all-encompassing image, it assumes the form of a simile. Here are a few exmples to make the point clear. Lyric 24 of *Gitanjali* :

> If the day is done, if birds sing no more, if the wind has flagged tired, then draw the veil of darkness thick upon me, even as thou hast wrapt the earth with the coverlet of sleep....

We know the import of the imagery of the main poem without any hint at similitude. We know that the items are the processes of life and the veil of darkness is death; but the inset image of the earth wrapt in coverlet of sleep has been introduced with 'as'. Similarly toward the end of the poem the image of the renewal of the flower "under the cover of thy kindly night" is introduced as u simile. Similarly in Lyric 41, the image of the maid waiting for the coming of the Lord is obviously without the help of a simile as the image of the soul of the devotee, but if in the last but one stanza when an image is brought within this central image, it is introduced as a simile :

> ...and set at they side this ragged beggar girl, a-tremble with shame and pride, like a creeper in summer breeze.

Gitanjali is predominantly a collection of mystical poems, but there are interpolations of other themes. Lyrics 35, 36, 37 suddenly strike almost out of context a patriotic note, and in these poems the metaphor-oriented image seems to adandon the imagination of the poet. *Lover's Gift* is a collection of love poems, and it is surprising to note how simile-ridden its iamgery is. Here are a few examples :

1. My love for her is my life in its fulness, *like* a river in autumn flood. (Poem 4)
2. My songs are one with my love *like* the murmur of a stream that sings with all its waves aud currents (Poem 4)
3. to hang in your ear *like* a round pink pearl, *like* a blushing whisper. (Poem 7)
4. ...and your robe is coloured *like* the rain cloud (Poem 8)
5. See the lake is deep and full, its water dark *like* a cow's eyes (Poem 9)

6. She is *as dark as* the message of the showers in summer, dark the shade of the flowering woodland, she is dark as the longing for unknown love in the wistful night of May. (Poem 15)
7. The world to you is *like* an old woman's chant at her spinning wheel, unmeaning rhymes crowded with random images. (Poem 24)
8. The spring flowers speak out like the passionate pain of unspoken love. (Poem 30)

What is still more surprising is that even in this collection as the theme changes from that of secularlove to something mystic or spiritual, the imagery again changes its complexion from being simile-oriented to assuming metaphorical import. Lyric 37, for example has the theme to the decay of body and sense organs pointing the way to the destination of death :

> You had your rudder broken many a time, my boat, and your sail torn to tatters. Often had you drifted toward the sea, dragging anchor and heeded not.

We at once see the signficance of the imagery—the boat is our mortal body: the sail, the senses of perception, the organs and the faculties; the sea, the eternity of death; the anchor, the various ways and means we practise to keep this boat-body bound to the shore. The next collection of poems bound in the same volume with *Lover's Gift* and entitled *Crossing* comprises 78 poems, the theme of all of which is spiritual and again the imagery becomes metaphorical. This is a subject which claims serious attention. With the change of the subject from secular to spiritual and from spiritual the complexion of imagery in Tagore's poetry changes. It could not be an efiect of chronological development, because the dates of composition of the poems in various collections do not bear this out. The only conclusion we can draw is that Tagore is so immured in the mystical theme, and he assumes his reader to be so immured in it that the metaphorical comes naturally to him and is naturally appropriated by his readers.

Is it the property of mystical literature in other languages and cultures as well ? I took up some of the mediaeval English mystical writers, and from what I found, my veneration for our Indian religious tradition became profounder. Here is a passage

from a twelfth century treatise of unknown authorship, entitled: *The Chiding of God's Children.*

> When our Lord suffereth us to be tempted in our beginning, he playeth with us as the mother with the child, who sometimes fleeth away and dideth herself and suffereth the child to weep and cry, and busily to seek her with sobbing and weeping; but then cometh the mother suddenly with merry cheer and laughing, embracing, her child and kising and wipeth away the tear. Thus fareth our Lord with us...[25]

The mother-child image has been beautifully drawn indeed, but it becomes secondary in so far as it issued to serve as an illustration of a spiritual phenomenon. Moreover, the imagery has been brought in as a simile. The imagery and the subject do not become identical by themselves, but the writer has to pull them together. In Tagore, as we have seen in the analysis of many poems, the image does not remain an illustration, but becomes the very vehicle of the spiritual phenomenon. This is what I mean by saying that while in other mystical writers outside the Indian tradition, the imagery is simile-oriented, in Tagore it is meatphor-oriented. I looked through other mediaeval mystical writers in English and French such as Walter Hilten, Richard Rolle, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Thomas a Kempis, and I found the same characteristic in their imagery whenever they deign to employ it, as I found in *The Chiding of God's Children.*

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K. K. Sharma

ART AND PERSONALITY : THE FOCUS OF TAGORE'S AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY

Tagore holds that man's personality, the spontaneous expression of which is art, cannot be easily and universally defined. Nevertheless, he endeavours to explain it as precisely and elaborately as possible. What he means by 'personality' is the very soul, the essence of the inner being of man and of the world around him. The artist strives to know himself and the world with a view to grasping the personality. When he discovers the personality—the soul—in him and in the world around him, his incessant search comes to an end, and he feels completely satisfied and happy. Tagore illustrates it from an incident of his life. When he went to Japan for the first time, he had in the steamer among other passengers a Japanese, who was returning home from Rangoon. On touching the shore of Japan, while he and other passengers noted all kinds of things and their peculiarities and were confused and lost, the Japanese passenger saw fewer things than others, but he "diven at once into the personality, the soul of the land, where his own soul found satisfaction."[1] All others saw more things than he, but others could not see and know Japan better than he because he alone was able to see the soul of the country. What Tagore stresses is that to know innumerable details about a th. g is not to know its essence, its personality. And for t e artist, nothing is as invaluable as personality. Apparently, the true artist is entirely different from an ordinary man who is not an artist. Tagore makes this distinction clear with the help of an example. He says that when a person, who is not an artist, draws some particular tree, he will

try to present it in all details because for him peculiarity is not personality. But when the true artist paints that particular tree, "he overlooks all details and gets into the essential characterisation"[2]; he is primarily concerned with the very soul, the personality of it.

Tagore further explains his concept of personality and its relationship with man and the artist. He states that man has eyes which reveal, and bring him in contact with, the physical universe. But in addition to it, man has an inner faculty of his own--viz, his 'luminous imagination' which is something so special as it enables him to discern and establish his relationship with the universe of personality by which Tagore means "the supreme self of man."[3] Man's resplendent imagination, leading him to the world of personality, fills him with a vision of wholeness and the sense of perfection, the sense of immortality. That is, he becomes conscious of Man the Eternal--his perfect and eternal being. It is this divinity of Man the Eternal which inspires him to express it in great creative acts saturated with truth goodness and beauty. All outstanding works of art, literature, science, philosophy and religion are the consequences of it :

> The individual man must exist for Man the great, and must express him in distinterested works, in science and philosophy, in literature and arts, in service and worship.[4]

Again, in the chapter, "The Music Makers", in the book entitled *The Religion of Man*, Tagore dwells upon the idea of personality and attempts to define it convincingly. Interpreting it philosophically, he regards it as an awareness of higher unity within man, and points to its negative and positive aspects, highlighting the greatness of the latter aspect. Apropos of this, he writes :

> What I mean by personality is a self-conscious principle of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts that are individually his in knowledge and feeling, wish and will and work. In its negtive aspect it is limited to the individual separateness, while in its positive aspect it ever extends itself in the infinite through the increase of its knowledge, love and activities.[5]

To elaborate his concept of personality, Tagore points to the distinction between the life of self and the life of soul. Man becomes aware of personality when he feels the separateness from all, but he achieves the acme of the consciousness of personality when he feels unity with all. Inevitably, the awareness of separation entails the awareness of unity because it is impossible for it 'to exist only by itself. But when in man the awareness of separation becomes more predominant than the consciousness of unity, thus making his personality narrow and dim, he leads primarily the life of self. On the contrary, when the awareness of unity supersedes the feeling of separateness, making man's personality large and resplendent in truth, he lives the life of soul. Consequently, the central preoccupation of man is to free his personality from the shackles of self so as to attain the personality of soul, "to turn his inward forces into the forward movement towards the infinite, from the contraction of self in desire into the expansion of soul in love."[6] Tagore emphasizes that for man personality is the reality, the ultimate goal because it is the consciousness of oneness and the focal point of all relationships. Thus "this world is a real world only in its relation to a central personality."[7] If the centre collapses, life is reduced to meaningless jumbled heap of abstractions. Hence the artist, practising any of the art forms, attempts to explore and communicate this vital truth about human life and the universe.

Man's realisation of personality fills him with the faith in, and the dream of, millennium, a creation of his belief in the continuous bright future. His dream of the millennium, which is the ideal reality for him, is expressed and preserved by him in his hope and love which are embodied in the dignity of his being, attained by the practice of high ideals and beauty. Thus the poet, like any artist, defines man and his personality in the following words :

> We are the music-makers,
> We are the dreamers of dreams.[8]

The primitive man, according to Tagore, was obsessed with his physical needs. Naturally, he was confined only to the present, and was unable to develop a personality, having a deep urge of his consciousness to find freedom in a world of human values.

Human personality, Tagore affirms, consists of all our passions and faculties, having both the good and the bad, because there is nothing in the universe which is absolutely good or bad. All that are good or bad, howsoever conflicting with each other, form the great human personality and the wonderful music of man. Tagore points to the unique value of the integration of human personality for its fulfilment and its expression in all arts and literature in the following words :

> The animal in the savage has been transformed into higher stages in the civilized man—in other words has attained a truer consonance with Man the divine, not through any elimination of the original materials, but through a magical grouping of them, through the severe discipline of art, the discipline of curbing and stressing in proper places, establishing a balance of lights and shadows in the background and foreground, and thus imparting a unique value to our personality in all its completeness.
>
> So long as we have faith in this value, our energy is steadily sustained in its creative activity that reveals the eternal Man. This faith is helped on all sides by literature, arts, legends, symbols, ceremonials, by the remembrance of heroic souls who have personified it in themselves.[9]

What is characteristic of man's personality, in Tagore's opinion, is its creativeness. Man, as a person, is organic, having innate capacity to choose things from his surroundings and make them as his own. By his inherent likes and dislikes of things all around him, he does not form so much a kind of outer world for himself as he creates himself. The essence of the creative man is his emotional forces which create his unique personality. So it is man's capacity to feel which imparts him a personality, the compelling expression of which results in a work of art. Tagore explains it by drawing a line of demarcation between a religious man and the theologian. To quote his own words :

> The principle creative forces, which transmute things

> into our living structure, are emotional forces. A man, where he is religious, is a person, but not where he is a mere theologian. His feeling for the divine is creative. But his mere knowledge of the divine cannot be formed into his own essence because of this lack of the emotional fire.[10]

The outer world is given a particular shape and movement by man's peculiar perception, and thus by the touch of his personality and by coming within the range of his emotions, it becomes his concrete world, and not an abstract world of metaphysics or the mere external world of Physics. The physical world of space and time becomes an integral part of man's personality when he looks at it and absorbs it with emotions of love, hatred, wonder, fear, pleasure, pain, etc. Naturally, it changes in him, and thus his personality and the world around him become inalienable from each other. But Tagore believes that if man possesses innate, lovable emotions which make the outer world very intimate to him, the external world has also its charms, and the two kinds of charms co-exist with each other. Tagore here evinces his belief in the *Rasa* theory of Indian poetics which is generally considered to be the soul of all artistic creations in India.[11]

The artist and the world around him are inalienable from each other. The artist's world—his personal, individual world in which he lives—and the inner man, the individual in him are close to each other and share their inner secrets. The artist as a personal, individual being sees, loves and intimately knows his ambient universe not to gain any benefit and power from it, but simply to see it, to know what and where it is and what he is. Obviously, the artist is attached with the world so as to explore and comprehend it as well as his individuality. When man's awareness grew with his evolution, he was able to seek truth only by attaining perfect harmony with the world of personality.

In fact, the artist's preoccupation with personality begins with his realisation of the creative impulse innately given to man. The artist's creative urge emanates from the creative impulse in man, which, according to Tagore, has been present in him right from the primitive times. He has always been busy in creating his own

world out of the things available to him. And it is in his urge and act of creation that his real freedom lies. A life without freedom of creation is, for man, nothing but a prison, and it is only by his creative activities that he lives in his own world, a personal world indeed, and not a world in which he is forced to live by nature. Patently, he cannot be satisfied with, and contained in the world given to him by birth; on the contrary, he is determined to create a world of his own bits. He is endowed with a free spirit to invent his own life, internal as well as external. He moves from nature's purpose to "the world of spirit,—the world where he has his freedom of creation; where he is in cooperation with the infinite, where his creation and God's creation are to become one in harmony."[12]

It is in love—man's highest experience of joy and intensest feeling of freedom—that his personality finds its highest realisation. With the support of Indian scriptures and texts, Tagore establishes that the aim of man's freedom is to comprehend "I am". But his true freedom consists not in the extension of his self, but in its intensity and that is love. The animals also experience freedom and love, but their experience is different from that of man in that their love fills them with glow and indivisible joy, but unlike man's love, it "has not the flame which goes beyond the mystery of personality."[13] Simple information or mere discovery of power has nothing to do with the inner soul of persons and things—that is, personality—; it is only the outside of them. The artist deals with the infinite reality (projected into human personality also) which we realise within us and perceive in the entire cosmos as spontaneously as the morning light which is not governed by a scientist, however great he may be. This infinite reality is comprehended by us only when we are able to see clearly the truth of love and goodness. As Tagore affirms :

> ...we touch the infinite reality immediately within us only when we perceive the pure truth of love or goodness, not through the explanations of theologians, not through the erudite discussion of ethical doctrines.[14]

II

That the main purpose of art is the expression of personality should not, in Tagore's opinion, lead us to infer that an ordinary

man, who is not an artist, does not reveal his personality in various acts and thoughts. The fact is that man cannot help expressing his personality. And yet an artist is strikingly different from a common man in that he feels the compulsion to reveal his personality and thus is absorbed in creative activity, while for the latter, self-expression is not the primary aim and he seldom feels the deep urge to express himself under the irresistible pressure of 'emotional surplus'. It is from the artist's surplus emotionalism and the subsequent compulsion to express himself—viz. human personality—that art springs. Naturally, Tagore asserts :

> ...when our heart is fully awakened in love, or in other great emotions, our personality is in its flood-tide. Then it feels the longing to express itself for the very sake of expression. Then comes Art, and we forget the claims of necessity, the thrift of usefulness,—the spires of our temples try to kiss the stars and the notes of our music to fathom the depth of the ineffable.[15]

As art has its origin in man's irrepressible urge to express his personality and surplus emotions, any human work deviod of them cannot be art. This Tagore illustrates from the Mughal and British buildings in India. The architectural works of the Mughal period at Agra and Delhi and the paintings and music of that age are works of art because the Mughal rulers and architects made India their own country and had sincere feelings for her. These artistic creations are great because they reveal human personality. Oh the other hand, the British in India were mere administrators and officials, having nothing personal and permanent in this country. Inevitably, their activities in India could have "nothing to express in the true language of art,"[16] and were merely an abstraction. There could never exist a sort of reciprocal relationship between the British administrators and the Indian people, and hence these foreigners could not give us true works of art.

Tagore further points to the revelation of personality as the essence of art by bringing out the difference between a man's dress and that of a woman which also evinces the distinction between the sense of utility and sentiment. A man's dress avoids all that is simply decorative and unnecssary. But as "woman is

more concrete and personal than man",[17] she immensely cares for her delightfulness and musicality. Since she is valued more for her delightfulness, than her usefulness, she "takes infinite care in expressing, not her profession, but her personality."[18] As art primarily aims at expressing personality, and not anything purely analytical and abstract, it is necessary for it to employ the language of music and picture. Perhaps this, in Tagore's view, is the reason why the aim of art is wrongly considered to be the creation of beauty, while the fact is that beauty is only a means to achieve something higher, and not the ultimate end of art.

For art, according to Tagore, neither matter is as indispensable as human personality. From the wrong notion of the aim of art as the creation of beauty emantes the perplexing, endless controversy whether matter or manner is all important for art. It is true that matter alone cannot have the elements of beauty, and therefore it is often said, though not truly, that manner is the most significant aspect of art. But the real essence of art is not to be sought in matter or manner, since "the true principle of art is the principle of unity."[19] Just as the food value of some of our diets can be found in the component parts of our diet and the taste value in its utility which is beyond analysis, so the matter is an abstraction treated by science and the manner is an abstraction handled by rhetoric. True art deals with personality which is the harmonious whole of the two—the matter and the manner—; it is "an organic complex of matter and manner, thoughts and things, motives and actions."[20] No wonder all abstract ideas are foreign to art, and if they are to find expression in a work of art, and if they are to take the form of personifications. Spenser's portrayal of the Seven Deadly Sins in *The Faerie Queen* and Keats's incessant depiction of abstract things as concrete bearwitness to it. Tagore asserts that the reason why poetry employs words which have vitality can be attributed to it. Thus the English word 'consciousness' is rarely used in poetry because it is not yet free from abstraction, while the Indian synonym of it 'chetna' is frequently used in poetry because it is replete with vitality. Likewise, the English word 'feeling' finds place in poetry beeause it is surcharged with life, while the Bengali synonym of it 'anubhuti' is avoided by poets because it is not far from abstraction and has not the flavour of life. Similarly, some truths of science

and philosophy, which have not taken colour and taste from life as yet, will not find place in works of art just as the half-cooked or uncooked vegetables are not served at a feast. In a word, the essence of art is the expression of personality. And this accounts for the exclusion of history, if it deals with abstractions, from the realm of art. But history becomes an integral part of art, if it is an expression of personality. To quote Tagore's own words :

> History, so long as it copies science and deals with abstractions, remains outside the domain of literature. But, as a narrative of facts, it takes its place by the side of the epic poem. For narration of historical facts imparts to the time to which they belong a taste of personality. Those periods become human to us, we feel their living heart-beats.[21]

As man's personality is immense and ever-growing, so the frontiers of art cannot be delimited. Art grows in consonance with the growth of man's personality. The domain of art, therefore, is ever extending. Man is grasping newer regions of truth, and with that the scope of art is also expanding because it is invariably the expression of man's personality, discovering and comprehending the manifestation of the Infinite in the realm of truth. True, "as the illumination of man's personality throws light upon a wider space, penetrating into hidden corners, the world of art also crosses its frontiers and extends its boundaries into unexplored regions."[22] Art is an incarnation of man's continual success in exploring and understanding the universe. Thus the classical art and literature were concerned with only kings, and had nothing to do with people loving and suffering in loneliness. But with the passage of time when man's personality grew and philosophy, history and science came into being, art and literature dealt with them, as well as with man's social awareness. All that man felt and understood in the universe found spontaneous expression in art. Loveliness and ugliness of nature, dreary deserts, dark caves, etc.—all have inevitably found central place in many a memorable artistic creations. As man's personality is limitless in its growth and makes everything living and human by its mere contact, so art—an exposition of it—is also

boundless in its scope and and dimensions. Tagore observes in this connection :

> This encroachment of man's personality has no limit, and even the markets and factories of the present age, even the schools where children of man are imprisoned and jails where are the criminals, will be mellowed with touch of art, and lose their distinction of rigid discordance with life. For the one effort of man's personality is to transform everything with which he has any true concern into the human. And art is like the spread of vegetation, to show how far man has reclaimed the desert for his own.[23]

Further, Tagore points out that since the artist's own personality is the centre of the world he presents in his work, the world of his creation, though different from the world we usually see because the artist's mind usually moves in a time different from that of others, does not collapse through dislocation. Obviously, the artist's personality is the focal point and solid foundation of his creative act. Tagore states :

> All the facts and shapes of this world are related to this central creative power, therefore they become interrelated spontaneously. His world may be like a comet among stars, different in its movements from others, but it has its own consistency because of the central personal force. It may be a bold world or even a mad world, with an immense orbit swept by its eccentric tail, yet a world it is.[24]

Tagore illustrates his concept of creative process centred upon personality from Walt Whitman, the celebrated American poet. Like every great writer, Walt Whitman creates his own unique world in which things have different meanings because his mind changes position and moves in a time different from that of others. In fact, the artist changes his mental focus, and has a perspective different from others. The result is that the world of his work is entirely different from that of the traditional. In his world even solid institutions become insignificant and transitory, while love for close companions which is as short-lived as clouds that appear

and disappear in the sky, is much more permanent than the so-called time-honoured institutions. Thus Tagore affirms :

> Here he sees things in a time in which the mountains pass away like shadows, but the rain-clouds with their seeming transitoriness are eternal. He perceives in his world that this love of comrades, like clouds that require no solid foundation, is stable and true, is established without edifices, rules, trustees or arguments.[25]

III

The artist's personality, which is central to his work and imparts it solidity and permanence, is what differentiates art from science. True, it is the presence and absence of personality which distinguish art and science from each other. While in the former it is all important, the latter dismisses it completely. Consequently science, as opposed to art, is destructive in as much as it disturbs the reality of the world by throwing it into an abstraction, thus making things almost nothing and replacing all living personal relationships by dead reason and analysis. It is the world of personality, the very soul of art, which enables us to comprehend the world and the reality of creation. Science, which is impersonal and deals with the world of reasoning, fails miserably in this respect, though its numerous advantages cannot be denied. Stressing the superiority of art over science because of the latter's failure to grasp correctly and fully the world and its creator, Tagore remarks :

> For the world is not atoms and molecules or radio-activity or other forces, the diamond is not carbon, and light is not vibrations of ether. You can never come to the reality of creation by contemplating it from the point of view of destruction. Not only the world but God Himself is divested of reality by Science, which subjects Him to analysis in the laboratory of reason outside our personal relationship, and then describes the result as unknown and unknowable. It is a mere tautology to say that God is unknowable, when we leave altogether out of account the person who can and who does know Him. It is the same thing as saying that food is uneatable when the eater is absent.[26]

Tagore repeatedly avers that it is personality of man that constitutes the real world and forms the centrifugal force of art. On the other hand, science dwells upon reasoning and abstractions, and therefore it is not as indispensable for us as art ; it only claims to have found out the real world, and what is appalling about it is the fact that it neglects and looks down on the living world of simple people. Mere reasoning and analysis—the very soul of science—are far from the reality of human existence, the core of which is man's personality which forms the main domain of art. Apropos of this, Tagore says : "...the reality of the world belongs to the personality of man and not to reasoning, which, useful and great though it be, is not the man himself."[27] In this regard, Tagore echoes Wordsworth who rejects science, more or less, on the same ground :

> Sweet is the lore which Nature brings ;
> Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things :—
> We murder to dissect.[28]

A true work of art embodies the element of the artist's personality, and it is this which imparts it the power of touching the depths of our own personality. In a word, the personality of man is the subject of his creative activity ; a piece of art is the creation of a personality and hence it appeals to the personality of those who come in its contact. Art differs from Science also in that the latter, unlike the former, eliminates personality from creation, and focusses only on the medium of creation.

In fact, the world of art and the world of science are as different from each other as the physical in man from the personal in him. As against the physical, the personal in man is free from needs, both of body and mind—it is the highest in man and has its own personal relations with the vast world so as to satisfy personality. The world with which science is concerned is not real, but abstract ; it can be comprehended by our intellect, and not by our personality. On the other hand, the world of art is real to us : "We see it, feel it ; we deal with it with all our emotions. Its mystery is endless because we cannot analyse it or measure it. We can but say, 'Here you are.'"[29] This is truly a world of reality which science shuns. To know art is to know it, for the two are inalienable.

The world of science is without the element of personality and does not come within the range of man's feelings ; he only knows it but has no feeling for it. On the other hand, art is very intimate to man ; he not only knows it, but feels it and in the process feels himself also. The artist expresses his personality and describes the world which he knows by feelings, and thus his task is more difficult than that of the scientist who easily describes what he knows about a particular thing and has nothing to do with what he feels about it. The scientist deals with simple, impersonal facts, while the artist is concerned with personal facts, the things he deeply and truly feels about an object. Obviously, the felt facts the artist deals with cannot be analysed like the bare facts of the scientist, but they immediately touch and absorb man's heart. Drawing the line of demarcation between the scientific truth and the ultimate truth as understood by the artist through the realisation of personality, Tagore observes :

> The scientific knowledge of his son is information about a fact, and not the realization of a truth. In his intimate feeling for his son he touches an ultimate truth—the truth of relationship, the truth of a harmony in the universe, the fundamental principle of creation.[30]

As against the scientist or the rational man who strives to seek "an impersonal principle of unification which can be applied to all things,"[31] the artist endeavours to seek the unique, the personal in the heart of the universal and vice versa. Contrary to a Botanist who looks at a tree to generalize and classify, the artist looks at the tree as unique. The artist particularizes, and does not generalize the tree by not highlighting its peculiarity which causes discord, but by concentrating on "the personality which is harmony."[32] Thus the artist strives after the inner concordance of that one thing with its outer surroundings of all things.[33]

In short, the artist is mainly concerned with the personal aspect of truth, and not the impersonal side of it as purposed by the man of science. Tagore illustrates it from a man who is both a doctor and a father. As a doctor examining his son, he is concerned with the impersonal, scientific aspect of truth, but as father he has personal relationship with his son. As a doctor he keeps aloof the fact of a son and the child is an abstraction to

him, just a living body in all its physiological aspects and functions. His impersonal relationship with his son, his scientific knowledge of him, cannot lay bare a greater truth than the one he grasps through his personal relationship with him. While the former relationship only gives him an information about a fact, the latter brings to him the truth of harmony in the cosmos, the basic law of creation. To quote Tagore's own words :

> The scientific knowledge of his son is information about a fact, and not the realization of a truth. In his intimate feeling for his son he touches an ultimate truth—the truth of relationship, the truth of a harmony in the universe, the fundamental principle of creation.[34]

The artist, unlike the scientist, has nothing to do with the dissection of things and their examination in isolation ; he is devoted to the scrutiny and exposition of beauty present everywhere in the creation in the ineffable unity in everything in its harmonious whole.

IV

Tagore opines that as perfect truth can only be known through personality, so the artist is basically concerned with the world of personality. The world is a perfect reality—the amalgam of the infinite and the finite—only when it is created and comprehended by man's personality. The artist shows how man's object of life is to establish a perfect and personal relationship with the world which is, in fact, the world of infinite personality. The world of personality is the only real world because a mere knowledge of truth is imperfect as it is impersonal. But man's enjoyment of anything is personal and hence real. The moment he enjoys the idea of God, the mere knowledge of whom is impersonal and abstract, He becomes a perfect truth to him ; He is active and the infinite assumes the aspect of the finite, and hence a perfect reality, though a personal one. The joy that a man derives from anything is real because it is personal. True "perfect truth is only perfectly known by our personality"[35] and this accounts for the artist's central preoccupation with personality.

The artist's emancipated awareness of his personality enables him to feel the Person who is omnipresent and is the ultimate reality. Tagore refers to the little-known village poets of East

Bengal who could sing of the Eternal person permeating the entire cosmos, including all, living and non-living.

These poets would say like every artist what the Vedic Rishi speaks of the person whom he sees in him and in everything :

> I have seen the vision,
> the vision of mine own revealing itself,
> coming out from within me.[36]

Quite often the artist strives to attain complete identification of his being with the Infinite Being who is beyond words and thoughts. In other words, the artist, particularly in India, has the realisation of transcendental consciousness inalienable from the perfect sense of bliss. Tagore affirms that all arts and literature are an expression of man's intimate communion with his world, and with the Supreme Person manifesting Himself in all living and non-living.[37]

In fact, art embodies man's communication with the Infinite through the depths of his personality. It can be realised through a close personal contact with It, and thus has a personal communication with us and our being responds to It. Explaining it with the help of painting, he points out that the fact of a picture can be marked by observing it carefully. By scrutinzing its colours, by measuring its lines and by comprehending the laws of harmony followed in it, we can know all about it. "But even then," says Tagore, "it is no realization of the picture, for which we want an intimate union with it immediate to ourselves."[38] Again, a flower in a book of Botany imparts us only information about it, and it aims at giving us knowledge only. But a flower in a work of pure art has an entirely different end ; it "is a personal communication. And therefore until it finds its harmony in the depth of our personality it misses its mark."[39]

Tagore proclaims that as an artist what actually touched his heart's chords was the highly satisfying realisation of personality that overflowed him, entering into his being "through living channels of communication from all sides."[40] He rejects the scientist's view that to ignore the difference between life and non-life, the human and the non-human is to live in the primitive world. What is of paramount importance for man, according to Tagore, is the perception of organic unity in the

cosmos of which man is an integral part of the realisation of the omnipresent personality in harmony with the personality of man Tagore asserts :

> Our feeling of joy, our imagination, realizes a profound organic unity with the universe comprehended by the human mind. Without minimizing the differences that are in detailed manifestations, there is nothing wrong in trusting the mind, which is occasionally made intensely conscious of an all-pervading personality answering to the personality of man.[41]

Human spirit, and not science, can see the wonderful unity of relationship, pervading the universe. True, man's primal imagination, which is fresh and immediate in its experiences, can alone grasp the reality of the Eternal personality permeating the entire cosmos, and hence human personality also.

It is the realisation of this reality which gives birth to all arts and creative activities. Tagore quotes Shelley's following famous lines from *Adonais* in this context :

> That light whose smile kindles the universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move.

The artist's comprehension of personality is all important for him, since it is through this that he is able to receive the hidden message of joy, which, though pervades the universe, cannot be analysed. Scientific and analytical approaches can only give us information and can easily be explained in terms of measurement, but what imparts us delight cannot be interpreted by the facts of an arrangement of atoms and molecules. Tagore holds that in the arrangement of this world there is a serious concern about lending man joy which reveals the fact

> ...that, in the universe, over and above the meaning of matter and forces, there is a message conveyed through the magic touch of personality. This touch cannot be analysed, it can only be felt. We cannot prove it any more than the man from the other planet could prove to the satisfaction of his fellows the personality which remained invisible, but which, through the machinery, spoke direct to the heart.[42]

The knowledge of this vital truth about art came to Tagore through his reading of the old lyrical poems composed by the Vaishnav poets. He grasped the underlying idea interwoven with the apparent meaning of these love poems, which were mainly about the Supreme Lover, whom we feel in all forms of our love-relationships, illuminating our consciousness of reality and personality :

> They sang of a love that ever flows through numerous obstacles between men and Man the Divine, the eternal relation which has the relationship of mutual dependence for a fulfilment that needs perfect union of individuals and the Universal.[43]

As stated above, Tagore stresses the essential harmony and unity of human personality and the world as the prerequisite of all artistic creations. He wholly disagrees with the modern writers who consider disillusionment as real and declare human idealism as deceptive. If it is accepted that all our time-honoured idols of worship, though beautiful, are made of mud and hence the mud is real while the appearances in human idealism are illusory, then the entire creation is a colossal deception. The fact is that the realm of creation is made of the perfect harmony of all the conflicting elements in all things and human personality.

To conclude, art, according to Tagore, is inseparable from man's profound belief in the deep unity and harmony that exist between him and the world around him, the embodiment of which is manifest in the personality of the artist. For the creative artist,this belief is a religion which he comprehends straightaway, and which is not a system of metaphysics to be understood throu gh analysis and arguments. Such a religion of the artist incarnates the attitude of his entire being towards a truth which can be expressed only through its own ceaseless acts of creation. Apropos of this, Tagore says :

> Poetry and the arts cherish in them the profound faith of man in the unity of his being with all existence, the final truth of which is the truth of personality. It is a religion directly apprehended, and not a system of metaphysics to be analysed and argued.[45]

In a word, the uniqueness of personality is a vere rare phenomenon of the universe, and is the greatest mystery that man

encounters in the world. Though initially confined to mind and body, it breaks out of these bonds and also encompasses the past and the future. This is the reason why it depends on art for its fullest expression and its quest for endless joy. It is through his artistic creations, giving spontaneous expression to human personality, that man, in Tagore's view,

> ...is for ever sending his answer to the Supreme Person who, from the drabness of manifold facts, shines bright in the unutterable Mystery of Truth, whose another name is Beauty.[45]

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4. *Ibid.* p. 17.
5. "The Music Maker", *The Religion of Man*, p. 119.
6. "The Second Birth", *Personality*, p. 98.
7. *Ibid.*
8. "The Music Maker", *The Religion of Man*, p. 122.
9. *Ibid.* p. 126.
10. "What is Art ?", *Personality*, p. 13.
11. Apropos of the *Rasa* theory of Indian aesthetics, Tagore observes :

    > Our emotions are the gastric juices which transform this world of appearance into the more intimate world of sentiments. On the other hand, this outer world has its own juices, having their various qualities which excite our emotional activities. This is called in our Sanskrit rhetoric *rasa*, which signifies outer juices having their response in the inner juices of our emotions. And a poem, according to it, is a sentence or sentences containing juices, which stimulate the juices of emotion. It brings to us ideas, vitalized by feelings, ready to be made into the life-stuff of our nature. (*Ibid.*, p. 14-5).

12. "The Second Birth", *Personality*, pp. 92–3.
13. *Ibid.* p. 96.

Tagore's definition of love, given below, is very much relevant to the understanding of his concept of personality :

> However, whatever name our logic may give to the truth of human unity, the fact can never be ignored that we have our greatest delight when we realize ourselves in others, and this is the definition of love.
>
> ("The Creative Spirit", *The Religion of Man*. p. 49.)

14. "The Vision", *The Religion of Man*, p. 107.
15. "What is Art ?", *Personaliiy*, p. 17.
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24. "The World of Personality", *Personality*, p. 50.
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26. *Ibid.* pp. 50-1.
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28. Wordsworth, "The Tables Turned," *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, and a New Edition Revised by Ernest de Selincourt (London : Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 481.
29. "What is Art ?" *Personality* p. 4.
30. "The Vision", *The Religion of Man*, p. 100.

Here Tagore echoes Wordsworth's belief expressed about a century before in the following words :

> The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the poet, in singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge....

("Preface" to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Bnllads*, Paperback Edition, eds. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones [London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1976], p. 259.)

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Harish Raizada

HUMANISM IN THE NOVELS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Like Goethe and Victor Hugo, Rabindranath Tagore had a many-faceted and many-splendoured genius. He was poet, philosopher, prophet, patriot, painter, musician, mystic, novelist, essayist and educationist. The range of his accomplishments and achievements in these amazingly diverse roles is so remarkable that he surprises us by the vast and valuable heritage he has bequeathed to us. What make his achievements a precious treasure of the whole mankind and raise them above the barriers of time and place are the universality of his interests and the humanity of his spirit. Whatever else Tagore might have been, he was above everything else a great humanist and universalist—a true citizen of the world. Being born in the land of the saint poet, Chandidas who sang :

> Listen, O brother man :
> The truth of man is the highest truth
> There is no truth higher than that.

and reared on the finest elements of thought in Eastern and Western culture, he had cultivated the profound humanism of the great thinkers and seers of the world. His synthetic wisdom had given him the vision of the spiritual unity of mankind and made him averse to all that was narrow, parochial, or dogmatic, all that militated against the basic principle of harmony in the world. He believed in one world and in the eternal vision of man evolving into an All-man, *Vishva-Manava.*

The wide reputation Tagore's religious verses as given in *Gitanjali* gained in the wake of award of the Nobel Prize, has led people to believe that he is essentially a writer of spirituality and mysticism and not of man and of the earth. Even though he clearly points out that deliverance is not for him in renunciation and that God :

> is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and His garment is covered with dust.[1]

his admirers refuse to be disillusioned and take pride in confining his genius to his spiritualism alone. No one would doubt the spiritual greatness of Tagore and his writings but what offends one most is its elevation at the cost of his love for mother earth and his faith in humanism. For Tagore, there was no dualism between spiritualism and humanism. His humanism was in fact born of his belief in spiritualism and, paradoxical though it may appear, he was a staunch humanist because he was a profound spiritualist. Being mentally nourished on the Upanishads he developed the synthetic vision of the whole mankind, the entire world being, to him the manifestation of one God. When Sandip, a narrow-minded patriot and religionist in his novel, *The Home and the World*, asserts :

> But my powers are limited so my worship of Humanity is continued in the worship of my country.[2]

Nikhil remarks :

> I have nothing against your worship as such, but how is it you propose to conduct your worship of God by hating other countries in which, He is equally manifest. (p. 35)

Tagore's humanism is visible in his awareness of life and problems of the people around him and in his appraisal and criticism of those problems in the context of the wide humanity and mankind. There were very few Indian writers of that period who could discern the temper of their age with such keenness and subtlety and reflect it with such fidelity as Tagore. There were fewer

still who could interpret it with a vision undistorted by the excitement and violence of the age. In a Bengal 'roaring' under the indiscreet partition and roused to unprecedented anger and violence by the repressive and high-handed policy of Lord Curzon, it was not given to many to maintain the equilibrium of their minds and objectivity of their perspective. Tagore's prophetic vision alone could discern the inherent weaknesses of the militant Hindu revivalism and narrow-minded patriotism of the early twentieth century Bengal and his bold pen alone could pick up the courage to denounce them in loud voice. His writings thus played a very important part in holding back the mighty upsurge which portended ill for the whole country. It is not that his love for his country was less than that of his misguided compatriots but that he loved truth and humanity more than anything else and hence would not allow any fetish to swerve him from his humanism.

The best and the most tangible expression to Tagore's humanism is to be found in his novels. Though nearly each of his novels overflows with the profound love for earth and humanity, it is especially in his four novels—*Gora*, *Chaturanga* ('Broken Ties') *Ghare Baire* ('The Home and the World') and *Char Adhyaya* ('Four Chapters') that he devises intellectual discussions and convincing situations for asserting the importance of man above all pseudo-religious traditions and narrow-minded sectarianism and nationalism. In these novels he protests vehemently against all kinds of barriers of the family, the caste, the rituals, the sects, the groups, the party, the nation, the administration etc., that divide men and dwarf their personalities.

Even before Tagore wrote *Gora*, he exhibited in his earlier novel, *Rajarishi* ('The Saint King') a great impatience with all those evil practices of religion which vitiate the vision of man. In this novel which came out in 1887 and was later dramatised as the play *Sacrifice*, the novelist shows a conflict between the orthodox who favour bloody sacrifices at the altar of the goddess Kali and those who reject this inhuman custom. At the end of the novel, Jayasingha, the watchman of the temple, who is torn between the dictates of his conscience and superstitious religion, thrusts a dagger in his bosom and dies at the altar of the goddess. The death of his trusted servant shocks very deeply the priest Raghupati, who has been a staunch votary of sacrifices at the goddess's feet and has even demanded the king's

blood from Jayasingha. He undergoes a sudden change. Ultimately he realises his mistake and feels there is no use in tearing one's heart and sacrificing the blood of living creatures at an inanimate idol of stone. The author thus asserts the importance of living creatures over the blind worship of a supernatural deity.

The novel contains a severe indictment of the blind faith which tends to make man irrational, superstitious and heartless. By raising questions such as, "Will the goddess be pleased if an innocent kid is snatched from a poor woman's lap and sacrificed at its altar ?" and "will the servant Jayasingha serve God by obeying the priest who wants him to kill the king or by obeying his conscience which goads him to spare the royal life ?" Tagore appeals to his countrymen to replace the orthodox religion of blind faith by the religion of man and conscience, and blind worship of inanimate idols by love for living fellow-beings.

The novel, *The Saint King*, is specially remarkable, for in it Tagore makes the first effort to cast off the spell of Bankimchandra Chatterjee who, though a great novelist, suffered from a narrow religious outlook. Tagore's first novel,[3] *Bauthakurnir Hat* ('The Young Queen's Market') which came out as a serial in 1881 and was writtern under the shadow of Bankim's influence both in manner and matter, held a plea for the revival of the old values of Hindu Society, the rejection of life as Maya and achievement of salvation by asceticism. In *The Saint King*, Tagore rejects the orthodox views of his master but fails to free himself from his manner or technique. It is only when he writes *Choker Bali* (translated in English under the various titles, 'Sand in the Eye', 'Eye Sore', or 'Binodini') after a decade and a half in 1901–02, that he breaks away from Bankims's tradition completely and evolves his own independent method. From now onwards he discards the historical setting of the past and attempts to study the conflicts of his age and its people through his problematic and psychological novels.

Gora which was written between 1907 and 1909 and the English translation of which appeared in 1924, is undoubtedly the masterpiece of Tagore and one of the greatest novels written by the Indians. Herein the author asserts, without any reserve, the importance of man above society and narrow-minded sects. Binoy, a member of an orthodox Brahmin family and Lolita, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, decide to marry each other in

spite of the tremendous opposition from both sects, because they feel :

> If love is unable to acknowledge differences then why are there differences anywhere in this world.[4]

As their determination grows stronger, they forget "they were Hindu or Brahmo, and only remembered they were two human souls" (p. 306). Condemning the tyranny of society upon man, Binoy revolts against the die-hard Hinduism of his friend Gora and tells emphatically :

> Today I stand on my own feet ; I can no longer admit the right of society to be pacified like a demon by daily human sacrifices. And whether I have to live or die, I am not going to wander about with the noose of its injuctions fastened round my neck. (p. 320)

and again :

> Let me tell you though that in this matter I will not submit to any one's tyranny, I will admit the claims of society upon me only so long as society admits my claims upon it. If it refuses to regard me as a man, and wants to fashion me into a puppet or a machine, I too will not worship it with my flowers and sandal paste—I will regard it as a machine of iron. (p. 321)

The boldness of Binoy and Lolita in preferring the dictates of their hearts to the dictates of their society alienates them from their near relations, friends and religious leaders. Their conduct is denounced and they are discarded by all except Anandamoyi, the Brahmin mother of Binoy's friend Gora and Paresh Babu, the Brahmo father of Lolita, who do not find anything unworthy or outrageous in the union of the two willing hearts. Though living in different situations and undergoing different experiences, both of them have realised through their unflinching faith in truth that God can never approve Himself of man's division in the narrow-minded sects and of his sacrifice at the false deity of irrational religion. Anandamoyi tells Binoy :

> What after all is the difference, my son, between Brahmo and orthodox Hindu ? There is no caste in men's hearts–

> there God brings men together and there He Himself comes to them. Will it ever do keep Him at a distance and leave the duty of uniting men to creeds and forms ? (p. 182)

Paresh Babu echoes similar humanistic views when he says to Sucharita :

> Sectarianism is a thing which makes people entirely forget the simple and obvious truth that man is man—it creates a kind of whirlpool in which the society—made distinction between Hindu and Brahmo assumes greater importance than universal truth—all this time I have been vainly whirled round in this eddy of falsity. (p. 252)

At another place he says to Lolita :

> What to Him is the Brahmo Samaj ? What is Hindu society ? —He sees only Man. (p. 309)

Regretting the loss of faith in humanism among his countrymen, he remarks :

> But what I actually see before me is the intolerable aversion of man in our country,—and how this is dividing and sub-dividing our people. (p. 120)

In *Gora*, Tagore portrays the effects of the impact of Western liberal ideas on the caste-ridden Hindu society. He shows how under this powerful influence, the Hindu society splits up, into two groups—of those who imitiate the Western ideas slavishly and denounce their Indian heritage totally and those who as a reaction against this attitude stick to orthodox traditions blindly and tenaciously. Even while putting the cases of both the groups objectively and dispassionately the author, being a man of keen foresight and progressive vision, does not lose sight of the truth behind this confusion or the way out of this tangle. He knows that the true path is followed only by those like Anandamoyi, Binoy, Paresh Babu, Sucharita and Lolita, who though belonging to the opposite sects, do not allow their religious views to create a gulf between man and man.

The hostilities between the two groups are headed by Haran,

a narrow-minded Brahmo and a typical representative of the anglicised Bengalis who find nothing good in their one culture, and Gora, a sturdy Hindu patriot whose love for his motherland makes him denounce everything alien and accept every thing Indian. The dry narrow-mindedness and sectarianism of Haran is exposed by the author ruthlessly. Tagore has not lashed any of his other characters—not even Akshya of *The Wreck*—so heartlessly as he does Haran. The bitterest sarcasm is directed against him through the words of Mr. Bronlow the English Magistrate, who on being impressed by Haran's knowledge of Christian, religion, is led to ask him "Why, when he had gone so far, he stopped short of becoming a Christian himself!"(p. 140) Haran takes it as a compliment to himself and brags about it before his friends.

Gora's character has been depicted with wider catholicity and sympathy. He is shown as a symbol of the rising nationalism of the early twentieth century in India. He represents the aspirations and sentiments of the educated Bengalis of his age, who agitated against the injustice and arogance of the British rulers, and being conscious of their slavery, tried to seek out their cultural heritage and protect it from all types of onslaughts. To Gora, therefore, everything that is Indian is sacred and everything that is Indian is to be interpreted in terms of undiluted Hinduism. In one of his discussions with Sucharita, he remarks :

> I am a Hindu ! A Hindu belongs to no party. The Hindus are a nation, and such a vast nation that their nationality cannot be limited within the scope of any single definition. Just as the ocean is not the same as its waves, so Hindus are not the same as sects. (p. 294)

At another place he says :

> To you I make only this request : come inside India, accept all her good and her evil ;—if there be deformity then try and cure it from within, but see it with your own eyes, understand it, think over it, turn your face towards it, become one with it. You will never understand if you stand opposed and, imbued to the bone with Christian ideas, view it from outside. Then you

> will only try to wound and never be of any service.
> (pp. 102-103)

He further says :

> That which transcends country, which is greater than country, can only reveal itself through one's country.... I can assure you that through the open sky of India you will be able to see the sun—therefore there is no need to cross the ocean and sit at the window of a Christian church. (p. 103)

In theory he even believes that Hinduism is a very liberal religion and accommodates all shades of opinion within its fabric :

> You must understand that the Hindu religion takes in its lap, like a mother, people of different ideas and opinions ; in other words, the Hindu religion looks upon man only as man, and does not count him as belonging to a particular party. It honours not only the wise but the foolish also, and it shows respect not merely to one form of wisdom but to wisdom in all its aspects. (p. 296)

There is, however, a difference between what he professes and what he practises. In practice, he resorts to orthodox traditions and superstitions of Hinduism i.e., believes in castes and untouchability, worships idols and shuts the doors of his religion to all who deviate from its tenets even a little. In his fanaticism he not only disapproves of his closest friend, Binoy's marriage with a Brahmo, but breaks up all his relations with him. Tagore, however, makes all his observances of Hindu rites and all his enthusiasm for Hindu religions look ridiculous by putting him in an inexorable ironical situation. Little does Gora know that in Hinduism of his dreams, there is scope for everyone except him for he is not the full-blooded Hindu Brahmin that he imagines himself to be but an Irish boy orphaned during the Mutiny of 1857 and brought up by the Brahmin priest. His real identity is disclosed to him just when he is getting ready to receive the title of "The Light of the Hindu Religion" in a ceremony organized by the Hindu youths from all over the country. The revelation disillusions him completely. In the beginning he feels quite upset, but soon he regains his balance of mind. In a way the revelation

appears to lift a heavy load from his bosom and provide him immense mental relief. He at once rushes to Paresh Babu's house and blurts out before him in excitement :

> That which day and night I have been longing for but which I could not be, today at last I have become. To-day I am really an Indian ! In me there is no longer any opposition between Hindu, Musalman, and Christian. Today every caste in India is my caste, the food of all is my food." (p. 406)

Describing the mental torture he had to undergo in an effort to realise India through Hinduism alone, he says to Paresh Babu :

> Paresh Babu, so long I have been trying to realise India with my whole life—I was finding obstacles at every turn—and day and night I have been trying always to make these obstacles objects of devotion. And in order to make that devotion firm in its foundations I have not been able to do any other work—that was my one and only task. For that reason every time I have come face to face with the real India I have turned back in fear–shaping an India with my unchanging and uncritical thought I have all this time been struggling against everything around me in my efforts to preserve my faith whole and entire in that impregnable fortress ! Today in a single moment that fortress of my own creation has vanished like a dream, and I having got absolute freedom suddenly find myself standing in the midst of a vast truth ! All that is good or evil in India, all her joys and sorrows, all her wisdom and follies, have come in their fulness, close to my heart. Now I have truly the right to serve her, for the real field of labour is spread out before me—it is not a creation of my own imagination—it is the actual field of welfare for the three hundred millions of India's children. (pp. 405–405)

With the immense joy and supprise of a man who moves out of darkness to light and open air, he declares before Paresh Babu ;

> Today give me the *mantram* of that Deity who belongs to all, Hindu, Musalman, Christian and Brahmo alike—the doors to whose temple are never closed to any person of any caste whatever—He who is not merely the God of the Hindus, but who is the God of India herself. (p. 407)

By this emphasis on the cultural unity of India transcending caste, sect and religion, Tagore not only asserts the value of humanism in life but also points out the dangers faced by the national awakening in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century. He warns his countrymen against the drifting of the national movement towards a militant Hinduism under the stormy influence of extremist leaders like Tilak, Bipinchandra Pal, and Aurobindo Ghosh. Besides, by depicting the ironical situation of a white man cultivating the unbounded love for Hindu religion and nation, the author appears to suggest that religion and patriotism are not ingrained in the blood of a man from birth but are contracted by him from his surroundings and environments.

Saratchandra also attempts to depict a conflict between orthodox Hinduism and a liberal humanism in his novel *Shesh Prashna*. His votary of humanism, Kamal, however, represents such an anarchic conception of sex-relationship between man and woman that in spite of her great qualities of head and heart, she fails to win us to her point of view. Saratchandra's presentation of situations is not so convincing and effective as that of Tagore; his appeal for humanism is also consequently less touching than that of Tagore. Sarat in reality directs his attack against Hinduism on the delicate and controversial front of marriage and the sex taboos in Indian life. Kamal's hybrid origin and illicit relations with three persons one after rnother prejudice the readers so much that her humanistic views lose their proper appeal to them.

In *Gora*, Tagore has directed his fight of humanism against fanatic religions as well as narrow-minded patriotism simultaneously. In *Chaturanga* ('Broken Ties') and *Ghare Baire* ('The Home And The World') which came out in 1916 i.e. six years after the completion of *Gora*, he looks at the problem of humanism in two different back-grounds of religion and politics separately. In *Chaturanga*, he attempts to show the harm caused by the formal

religion and its advocacy of renunciation of life. In *The Home And The World*, he portrays unscrupulous and anarchic patriotism of the Swedeshi Movement in the early years of the 20th century Bengal.

Chaturanga or *Broken Ties* is a narrative of four stories which are named after their four main characters, uncle Jagmohan, Sacheesh, Damini and Sreebilas. The unity and coherence to these seemingly four different parts is imparted by Sreebilas who narrates these stories and is a connecting link among them. Like his counterpart, Binoy in *Gora* Sreebilas is one of those sensitive young men who are always in quest of the higher truths of life. As Binoy is drawn towards Gora, so is Sreebilas towards his friend and class-fellow, Sacheesh. The latter, however, owes his belief in atheism to his uncle Jagmohan, a representative of the staunch positivist—humanists who believed in living for the sake of others and were very popular in the Bengal of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Uncle Jagmohan's humanitarian work among the poor Mohammedan leather workers in the street, in defiance of the orthodox religion and conventional taboos, excites the wrath of his orthodox brother, Sacheesh's father, who breaks up his relations with him and Sacheesh for good. The conflict between the atheists (uncle Jagmohan and Sacheesh) and the orthodox religionists (Jagmohan's brother and his family) reaches a crisis when Sacheesh's supposedly devout brother refuses to give shelter to an orphan girl, Nanibala who bears his child. The uncle shelters the girl and Sacheesh, his follower, nobly offers to marry his brother's mistress in order to give her child a name. The girl, however, commits suicide and a little after uncle Jagmohan dies while looking after the poor plague-stricken leather workers.

The deaths of Nanibala and uncle Jagmohan shake Sacheesh's faith in the dry rationalism and atheistic humanism. He deserts atheism aud swings over to the opposite pole. He renounces the wordly life and turns the disciple of an ascetic who believes in the realisation of God through rasa i.e., abandonment in an ecstasy of wild emotion. Sacheesh's efforts to abandon himself more and more to his mystic raptures are, however, hampered for a short time by the amorous attentions of a wilful widow, Damini, another inmate of the Ashram. His friend, Sreebilas who has joined him in his new quest for truth and has been following him until

now in all his experiments for spiritual elevation, notices the conflict of his mind and begins to realise the futility of this renunciation of life. Sreebilas's renewed love for human life and its blessings make him leave the 'ashram' and his friend's ascetic path. When Damini, too, on realising her inability to divert Sacheesh from his ascetic mission, leaves 'ashram' for good, Sreebilas marries her. Though Sreebilas's domestic bliss is cut short by the early death of Damini, yet he feels quite contented with his life. He is happy that he has survived his loss of faith in human life. The circle of his experiences is complete now and he once again returns to humanism with which he had started his life. But his new humanism is not atheistic ; it is theistic, and is connected not only with head but also with heart. Thus in *Broken Ties*, Tagore clearly asserts his faith in humanism and life on this earth.

In *The Home and the World*, Tagore once again reverts to the political problems of his own time. In *Gora* he has propounded his faith in humanism by defining his motherland as a cultural unity rising above the narrow limits of sects, castes, and religions; in this novel, he reaffirms his faith in it by repudiating the idea of nation-state in India. In it Tagore portrays the conflict between nationalism and universal manhood vividly and gives the most profound expression to his faith in the perfect independence and freedom for an individual irrespective of any particular nationality.

The plot of the novel is set against the background of the Swadeshi movement of the first boycott of foreign goods and the campaign of national self assertion through the use of violent methods of struggle against Britain. Against the setting of this political crisis arising out of the partition of Bengal and the repressive policy of Lord Curzon, the author portrays the psychological and ideological conflict in the minds of three sharply contrasted characters, Nikhil, his wife, Bimala and his friend, Sandeep. Tagore, was one of the pioneers of the Boycott Movement in Bengal but when he found it growing violent and indiscreet, he withdrew his support for it and condemned it through his writings. His most powerful criticism aganist its inhumanistic and violent tendencies, is expressed through the conficit of opinions between Nikhil and

Sandip. The latter represents the pugnacious nationalism and narrow-minded patriotism of the politically conscious Indians during the Swadeshi movement. He is a typical Machiavellian patriot who exhorts the people recklessly to burn British goods and resort to violence when opposed. He hypnotises the young students by his eloquence and profound patriotism and wins their whole-hearted support for his *Bandemataram* and Swadeshi movement. Even Nikhil's wife, Bimala, is completely swept off her feet by his worship of Mother India and unbounded enthusiasm for the cause of his country and religion. Nikhil, though a staunch believer in the Swadeshi movement himself, is totally opposed to narrow-minded patriotism and violence of any kind. He has no patience for Sandip's unscrupulous nationalism and bigoted Hinduism. Though a gentle and generous man, he is very firm in his denunciation of violence or the use of force which he considers as a sign of weakness for only the weak dare not be just. He remarks :

> It is ture that you cannot get anything except by force. But then what is this force ? And then also, what is this getting ? The strength I believe in the strength or renouncing. (p. 53)

He considers that his force is directed against justice and truth and clearly says :

> Use force ? But for what ? Can force prevail against Truth ? (p. 50)

Condemining Sandip's narrow-minded nationalism as a wicked legacy of the Western military style, he tells him :

> To tyrannize for the country is to tyrannize over the country. (p. 163)

At another place he points out :

> If that is what you really believe, there should be no difference for you between man and man, and so between country and country. (p. 35)

He again remarks ;

> I am willing to serve my country ; but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than my country. To worship my country as a god is to bring a curse upon it. (p. 22)

When Nikhil finds that Sandip's narrow vision makes him disregard the interests of the Mohammedans in the country, he remarks :

> If the idea of a united India is a true one, Mussalmans are a necessary part of it. (p. 182)

And afterwards when Sandip's followers find fault with them for cow-slaughter, he reminds them :

> Buffaloes in this country likewise give milk and are used for ploughing. And therefore, so long as we dance frantic dances on our temple pavements, smeared with their blood, their severed heads carried on our shoulders, religion will only laugh at us if we quarrel with Mussalmans, in her name, and nothing but the quarrel itself will remain true. If the cow alone is to be held sacred from slaughter, and not the buffalo, then that is bigotry, not religion. (p. 57)

Nikhil is a great humanist and has an unflinching faith in the importance of man above everything else on this earth. When he finds Sandip belittling the value of man in comparison to knowledge which he gathers and which exists for him, he points out to him :

> All I want to say is, that in Europe people look at everything from the view-point of science. But man is neither mere physiology nor biology, nor psychology, nor even sociology. Man is infinitely more than the natural science of himself. (p. 79)

Warning Sandip against his undermining of man's importance he tells him :

> You would go on wounding the great, the unselfish, the beautiful in man. (p. 79)

and finally asserts :

> I tell you plainly, Sandip, man may be wounded unto death, but he will not die.
> (p. 79)

Nikhil derives the strength of his views and purpose from his school teacher, Chandranath Babu who is himself a great believer in universal brotherhood. Criticistng the narrow-minded patriotism of Sandip and his followers, he tells Nikhil :

> I tell you, Nikhil, man's history has to be built by the united effort of all the races in the world and therefore this selling of conscience for political reasons, this making a fetish of one's country, won't do. I know that Europe does not at heart admit this, but there she has not the right to pose as our teacher. Men who die for the truth become immortal : and, if a whole people can die for the truth, it will also achieve immortality in the history of humanity. Here, in this land of India, amid the mocking laughter of Satan piercing the sky, may the feeling for this truth become real : What a terrible epidemic of sin has been brought into our country from foreign lands.
> (p. 264)

Nikhil's liberalism and humanism make him tolerate Sandip's presence in his house and estate for some months, but when he finds his followers in their fervid enthusiasm for the Swadeshi movement inflicting tortures on his poor peasants and creating gulf between Hindus and Muslims he asks him to leave his house and village. His wife, Bimala, who is by now completely disillusioned about the propriety of Sandip's narrow-minded nationalism and unscrupulous methods, also approves of her husband's action. Sandip is, therefore, left with no alternative but to leave them.

Babu R. P. Bhasker has correctly described *The Home and the World* as an allegorical novel where Bimala represents India, Nikhil, all that is good and vital in the Indian traditon, and Sandip, aggressive Western-type of nationalism which Tagore feared was beginning to take shape in his country. Here Tagore, with a prophetic vision, anticipates the method Indians were to employ in their struggle for independence. He seems to suggest that for

sometime India may, like Bimala, be hypnotised by the violent forces but ultimately it will resort to non-violent methods advocated by Nikhil.

In *The Home and the World*, Tagore has confined his criticism of violence in Indian politics only with regard to the Swadeshi and *Bandemataram* movements in Bengal. In *Char Adhyaya* ('Four Chapters') which came out in 1934 Tagore recalls another movement which believed in resorting to force our liberating India. In it he expresses his views about the terrorist activities of the secret revolutionary societies which sprang up in Bengal soon after Swadeshi movement. Like an objective artist, Tagore looks at the whole problem of the violent activities of the revolutionaries very dispassionately and rationally and does not hesitate in exposing their inherent weaknesses. Though he explains their point of view with a rare understanding and catholicity, yet he does not show any sentimental appreciation for their misguided heroism. In reality he pillories them for their misguided and inhuman acts and lack of farsightedness.

Tagore emphasises the unwholesome effect of the revolutionary activities on the promising and talented young men and women of India by portraying against its stormy background the touching conflict in the lives of two lovers, Ela and Atindra. Their involvement in the revolutionary turmoil stunts their growth and fills their lives with frustration and despair from which they find no escape. The realisation that their love will remain unfulfilled and that they will never be able to unite happily, makes them feel still more hopeless. The crisis comes when Atin is asked by his chief to kill Ela, lest on being arrested, she may divulge the secrets of their party. Before sending her to eternal sleep, Atin recalls before her all the incidents of his life and their unfulfilled love. During the highly touching conversation, he emphasises before Ela the futility of their lives and their revolutionary mission. In a mood of utter despair, he says to her :

> I'll confess to you for the first time to-day ; what you call a patriot, that I am not. The patriotism of those who have no faith in that which is above patriotism is like a crocodile's back used as a ferry to cross the river. Meanness, unfaithfulness, mutual mistrust, secret machin-

> ation, plotting for leadership—sooner or later these drag them into the mud at the bottom. That the life of the country can be saved by killing its soul, is the monstrously false doctrine that nationalists all over the world are bellowing forth stridently. My heart groans to give it effective contradiction. I had it in me, perhaps, to express it in words burning with truth, words that have remained great through the ages. But that has been denied me in this llfe. That is why the pain at my heart sometimes becomes so cruel.

It is this rational and progressive approach towards the seditious activities of the revolutionaries that distinguishes Tagore's *Four Chapters* from Saratchandra's *Pather Davi*, another Indian novel about the terrorists in Bengal. Though Sarat also attempts to reflect the virtues and shortcomings of the revolutionaries, his approach is more sentimental than that of Tagore who is very rational and objective in his outlook. By showing the revolutionary leader, Savyasachi as humane, sympathetic and liberal, Sarat not only weakens the portraiture of his character but also distorts the picture of the revolutionary activities in Bengal. Tagore's treatment of the revolutionary movement is more realistic and convincing than that of Sarat as in his portrayal of Indranath, more true and successful than that of Savyasachi by Sarat. Besides, by making Savyasachi loving and humane, Sarat instead of divesting the revolutionary movement of its charm, makes it more attractive and glamorous for the young men. His criticism of the movement turns to be its appreciation in reality. Like his representation of the revolutionary movement, his criticism of it is also weaker than that of Tagore. The protagonists of the terrorist activities in Sarat's novel are shown as far superior to those who realise the futility and inhumanities of these activities. Apurva and Bharati pale into insignificance fefore Savyasachi and his followers. On the other hand Atindra and Ela, their counterparts in Tagore's novel, *Four Chapters*, do not lose their identity even before the powerful character of Indranath. They are in no way inferior to him or less appealing than he. It is why Tagore's criticism of the Terorist movement is more effective than that of Saratchandra. Like *Gora*, this novel of Tagore is also more pro-

gressive and appealing than Sarat's bearing on the same theme.

Thus in all these novels, Tagore emphasises the importance of man above all types of orthodoxy, narrow-minded sectarianism, religion, parochialism and violence. Even in his other novels which do not describe the political and religious controversies directly and are devoted only to the study of the psychological relationship among different characters, he asserts his unswerving faith in the joy of life, freedom of the individual, respect for human personality, man's obedience to his conscience and his enjoyment of life through love and sacrifice—the universal virtues which stand for humanism in life.

The other great Indian novelist contemporaneans with Tagore lacked his foresight and clear vision. Bankimchandra Chatterjee's outlook on life is often clouded by this narrow and rigid socio-religious prejudices. His treatment of human values is constantly under the constrain of his committed and conventional moral views. Saratchandra Chatterjee and Premchand took a more positive attitude against the obsolete and outmoded social customs and traditions and denounced them. The shortcomings of the middle class society, the repugnant dowry system, sufferings of widows, caste restrictions and family quarrels and jealousies, felt the lash of the former while the ignorance and superstitions of Indian villagers and the cruel victimization of the Indian peasantry by landlords, money-lenders and priests, came under the severe attack of the latter. The works of both Saratchandra and Premchand are permeated by humanism and both of them portray vividly the heroism of Indian people in the face of all their miseries and sufferings. Saratchandra was, however, more passive than virile, more cautious than frank, more liberal than radical. Premchand loooked at his society from the mental make-up of the patriarchal, naive peasant and incorporated the peasant mentality and tolerance in his views and criticism. He wanted to usher in a new social order by appealing to the generous emotions and kind impulses of human heart rather than by hitting at the irrationality and fautuous thinking of the people. Tagore treated the problems of his age from the intellectual and philosophical point of view and hence more profoundly. He could see real man stripped of all prejudices and biases and as an incarnation of divinity on earth. It this assertion of the importance of man and human values above everything else that gives Tagore and his novels a unique place in Indian literature.

REFERENCES

1. *Gitanjali*, XI.
2. *The Home and the World* (Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, (1948), p. 35.
3. Tagore wrote a novel, *Pity*, even before *The Young Queen's Market*. *Pity* was, however, later on rejected by him and hence *The Young Queen*'s *Market* is usually taken as his first novel.
4. *Gora* (Macmillan and Co., Limited, London), p. 306.

A. P. Gnatyuk-Danil'chuk

TAGORE STUDIES IN CZARIST RUSSIA

The first Russian to know the ancestors of Rabindranath Tagore must apparently have been Gerasim Lebedeff, the celebrated Russian scholar and musician, who visited India in the 18th century and is virtually known as the founder of the Bengali national theatre and one of the earliest to initiate the study in Russia not only of Sanskrit but also of modern living Indian languages, including Bengali. Lebedeff incidentally was also the first Russian to translate direct from Bengali. While providing a firm plinth, for the Russian-Indian cultural ties, which have since been continuing to develop incessantly, Lebedeff stressed that he had done precisely what the peoples of Russian had long been aspiring for.

In the 19th century, when ancient Indian philosophy and literature began to be studied in Russia in right earnest, the Russian intellectuals unfailing by kept a watchful eye on the events then transpiring in India. The Russian public followed with interest the activities of Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, the close associate of the great enlightener of Bengali, Rammohun Roy.

In an article published in 1847 on Dwarkanath Tagore, in the journal "Biblioteka dlya chteniya" [Library for Reading], the author observed that "it would be difficult to find another person in India, no matter what his caste, creed or craft, who had done so much for the progress and happiness of his countrymen, as Dwarkanath. In England, as on the land of the Ganges, thou-

sands of people stood obliged by his noble acts." The article further observed that Dwarkanath Tagore showed the greatest zeal when it came to fighting the prejudices of his dissenters. He ardently believed in the need for education on the European model. "We need public schools, good teachers, and especially, learned works on science, geography, mathematics and history in modern Indian languages and dialects."

The distinguished Russian Indologist, Ivan Minaeff (1840-1890) who had visited India thrice, made copious reference to the Poet's father, Debendranath Tagore, in his diaries. Minaeff wrote in detail of the work of Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanath and Debendranath Tagore, and greatly admired the role of the Brahmo Samaj in the struggle against the outlined mediaeval traditions and customs.

This interest in contemporary Indian environment, in Indian philosophy and literature continued to grow in the early twentieth century. Leo Tolstoy, for instanc, is known to have had contacts with several Indian social leaders and writers, both Hindu and Muslim, and to correspond with Gandhi. He was interested in the writings of Vivekananda, and had regard for his work. In Tolstoy's works we come across not only numerous passages from masterpieces of ancient Indian literature but numerous sayings of Ramakrishna. Despite this, we cannot but be conscious of the glaring absence of any translations of works of modern Indian literature in this period. The reasons are not far to seek. In the conditions of the colonial regime, the tempestuous upsurge of modern Indian literature, with Bengali literature having a pivotal place, went unnoticed by the British litterateurs and scholars. The well-known Russian translator and literary critic, A. E. Gruzinskii (1858-1930), aptly noted that the "Encyclopaedia Britannica where, of all the places, one would have reasonably hoped to find some information on Tagore, had no entry under 'Tagore' in its latest, 1911 edition, and no reference to him in the articles on languages and literatures of India. And this when Tagore already had a whole thrity years of poetic work behind him and a great reputation in his country."

Accordingly, the publication of Tagore's poem, in poet's own prose translation from Bengali, by Macmillan & Co. in March 1913 turned out to be a veritable sensation in literary history. In 1913 alone, this Collection was reprinted 13 (!) times, in London

itself, by the same publishers; and, in November the same year, Tagore became the first Asian to receive Nobel Prize for literature of this Collection known under title *Gitanjali*. Translations of Tagore's work now started appearing in quick succession, first from original Bengali into English, and then from English into other languages of the world.

In Russia, Tagore became exceptionally successful and at once won wide recognition. Almost all that was published of him in London in English was translated and published in Moscow and Leningrad, either in journals or in individual editions. Two Collections of his works were taken up for publication. Tagore's works were published not only in Russian but also in Lettish, Lithuanian, Armenian, Georgian, Uzbek and other languages—something uncommon in the conditions of Czarist Russia. This obviously was the culmination of the vast interest that, over the centuries, the Russian public had in the culture not only of ancient but also of modern India. The Russian translators, and publishers even had the ingenuity of finding translations of works of Tagore unknown to the English readers and published only in India. In a word, as the Russian writer Konstantin Paustovsky put it, "Rabindranath Tagore reigned over the minds."

How does one explain such vast popularity of Tagore in Russia and the fact of his late recognition ? Tagore enjoyed wide popularity not because, as Academician Barannikov stated, the Russian readers found in his poems the traditional, exotic atmosphere, so alluring to those who sought elements of romanticism and mysticism in poetry, but primarily because his work was full of life-asserting ideals of humanism and democratism and had nothing in common with the despondent, decadent art.

A careful analysis of numerous statements on the life and work of Tagore scattered on the pages of periodicals and in Prefaces and Introductions of books published before the Revolution gives us an extremely interesting and, on the whole, correct assessment of this great Indian.

The first translator of Tagore in Russian was the well-known journalist, I. V. Shklovskii (Dioneo) (1865-1935), the London Correspondent of *Russkie Vedomosti* [Russian News] and *Russkoe Bogatstvo* [Russian Wealth], who besides being a literary critic and prose writer, was a poet in his own right. Here, it is interesting

to observe that he paid attention not merely to Tagore's poetry but also to his prose. In an anthology *Slovo* (No. 1), published in Moscow in 1913, he published excerpts from the *Gitanjali* and the short story *Judge*, reminiscent of the accents and tones in Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, though written earlier. In the brief introductory note, Shklovskii wrote that "Rabindranath Tagore was a great, national poet, whose songs were also in harmony with us. Tagore was the singer of life, singer of love and joys inspired by the contemplation of the cosmos...in his country, Tagore had long been famous....His songs, set to music by the Poet himself, were now sung by tens of millions of peasants everywhere where Bengali was spoken." Referring to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the author noted that Rabindranath was the "first of our saints who not only did not repudiate life but all the time sang of its joys." Appraising the philosophical credo of Tagore, Shklovskii cited the poet himself : "God is there where the ploughman ploughs the earth...the same current of life which flows day and night in my veins, flows in the universe..." The author summed up his general impression of the poetry of Tagore in such beautiful words : "World is a dark dungeon. But beyond the dungeon there yet is a whole beautiful world where there is still morning."

"Welcoming and appreciating the publication of the anthology, *Slovo*, the literary critic, V. Kranikhfeld, in his article, "Literary Echoes" devoted to the analysis of the work of Russian symbolists, wrote that the contents of this anthology "sidetracked the ideals of the symbolists, destroyed their deceptive illusions, and affirmed life....Tagore is the singer of life, joyous life, consecrated aud made meaningful by labour."

We thus see that, in these earliest assessment of Tagore in Russia, there is no mention of any "exotic" mysticism of Tagore, alienating us from life. References to religious mysticism appear much more frequently in the subsequent estimates of Tagore, possibly not uninfluenced by articles in British and American press which laid greater stress on this aspect of Tagore's work. In any case, all critics without exception noted Tagore's humanism, democratism, and love and acceptance of life.

The author of the first complete translation of *Gitanjali* into Russian. L. B. Khavkina, called Tagore pantheist and mystic, philosopher and reformer, discerning in his work even biblical

motifs, for, in her opinion, Brahma-Samaj seemingly was associated with Christianity. She emphasized the patriotism of the poet then grieving over the fate of his country, and accentuated one of the most progressive elements in Tagore's world outlook, placing the poet much higher than many of his contemporaries, she writes about his denouncing of the caste system: "We hear condemnation of caste system from the Poet's own mouth and this opinion voiced by a native Hindu is important for the country reeling under the oppression of complex, inexorable caste system".

The well-known novelist, poet and translator, V. P. Lebedeff, observed in an interesting article (1914) that the religious ideals of *Gitanjali* were the embodiment in poetic form of legends and traditions native to Tagore. The author emphasized that Tagore's poems were a "powerful hymn to spritual joys of life". Evaluating highly the poems included in the collection *Gardener* for their special spiritual purity and epic lucidity of mood. Lebedeff found in these "something common with the powerful and lucid lyricism of great Goethe."

Most interesting in V. P. Lebedeff's review was his characterization of Tagore's prose. At a time when Tagore was extolled in the West only as a poet, mystic and author of symbolic dramas. Lebedeff apparantly was able to lay his hands on translations and stories of Tagore published directly from India. (A 7-Volume Russian edition of Tagore's Works came out in 1915). Lebedeff essentially was the first scholar outside India to commend the realism of Tagore's prose : "The book of stories from Bengali life displays exceptional talent. These stories are a series of brilliant, exceptionally vivid and authentic pictures of the day to day life of the people."

Developing these thoughts further, the translators of Tagore's stories, A. I. and A. F. Slutsky, gave, in their Preface, a still more extensive and brilliant characterization of the realism of Tagore: "The short stories of Tagore are scraps of life itself, sometimes coloured in the sparks of his rich imagination...scenes of Bengali village painted in brilliant colours...these stories portray thousands of small details of unsophisticated homely life of the simple people...the short stories of Tagore are an evidence of the writer's subtle understanding of the turns of national life manifest in love and hate, joy and sorrow; his descriptions are full of power and skill of a genius. In this respect his short stories have

the same place in world literature as those of Maupassant and Chateaubrian. In realism and in subtle understanding and portrayal of human soul his short stories can be compared with the short stories of godly Tolstoy." The story volume contained 13 works of Tagore; and this volume (315 pages) was the largest of all the books of Tagore published both before the Revolution and in the early years after the Revolution.

Here, it is interesting to observe that some translators of Tagore, while appreciating the traditional appraisal of his poetry were, nonetheless, able to discern elements of realism in it. Thus, in the second volume of the aforesaid Russian edition of Tagore's Works (which contained poems from *Gardener*), the translator, V. G. Tardov (the well-known litterateur), wrote in his Preface: "All contemplation of the world, all 'mood' of this revived Brahmanism found reflection in Tagore's poetry like all ancient Aryan wisdom in Ramakrishna's parables and sermons. This is pantheism, close to the pantheism of the Upanishads and Vedanta". The translator emphasized the profoundly national character of Tagore's work. "He is the offspring of the spiritual culture of the East as Byron was of the English culture of early 19th century and Puskhin of the Russian." Futher Tardov tried to draw parallels with other poets of the 'East', the greatest influence of Tagore, according to him was that of Hafiz. Here, the Translator rightly noted that Tagore's mysticism was simply a tribute to classical traditions. "These images, like some special turns and comparisons, are common to all the 'mystic' poets of the East and seem to form a sort of a classical 'arsenal' of poetry. Besides, Tagore unfolds before us whole mines of images born of his enormous personal, talent.

Most noteworthy are V. G. Tardov's observations with regard to the style of *Gardener*—observations which, seemingly, have not lost their significance to this day. "These poems sing not only of the moods of the author's soul but also of that simple rural life of India which inspired these moods.

Of course, this does not mean that everything in Tagore's work was correctly understood in the years before the Revolution. Tagore was labelled a mystic; and some representatives of the fashionable currents of the 10-20's of the 20th century tried to make him their 'banner'. He was referred to as a true theosphist-symbolist at a time when his works did not even remotely have any-

thing in common with theosophy, and the system of his poetic images was only sometimes marked by purely external semblance with westerm symbolism.

In 1914, in a popular journal "Niva", Z. L'vovskii cited a great deal of interesting bioraphical information on Tagore. The author wrote that Tagore came to the fore not only as a poet but also as a musician, and that his first major work written in the 18th year of his age was an opera, Z. L'vovskii also stated that Tagore wrote his best works between the age of 25 and 35, possibly amidst serious, sad privations.

In 1914, the well-known linguist, Baudouin de Courtenay, living in St. Petersburg, published an article in the jounal "Vestnik znaniya" [Herald of knowledge], In this article, the 'author drew clearest parallels between the work of Tagore and that of the European poets.

In 1914 were published two different translations of Tagore's religious and philosophical lectures, *Sadhna.*—one of these with a Foreword by P. I. Timofeevskii, President of Russian Theosophical Society. The translations were reprinted in 1915 and 1917.

The publication of the book *Sadhana*, specially with a foreword by P. I. Timofeevskii, gave a further impetus to the attempts being made in some circles to associate Tagore's name with the theosophical movement, with which he had no connection. In fact, this Collection of lectures was an exposition, by Tagore of his views on some ideas of ancient Indian philosophy and above all, of the teachings of the Upanishads.

Three plays by Tagore—*Chitra, Post Office, King of the Dark Chamber*–were also published in 1915 in two different translations: and these were discussed in detail by the famous poetess, literary critic and translator. Z. A. Vengerova (1867–1941) in a large article, the last and the most extensive on Tagore in Russia before the Revolution. The article appeared first in the journal "Soveremennik" in 1915, and later formed the Preface in the fourth volume of Tagore's Collected works published in the same year.

Vengerova rightly stressed the contemporaneity of Tagore and noted the political threat that Tagore's work posed for the British colonial powers. The poetess wrote that the deep impression made by the works of Tagore was "in a considerable measure, due to the fact that Tagore came from India. But this very fact,

to some extent, threw to the background what was most important in him—that which in him was not from ancient India but from the modern times, that which made him not the singer of the world far removed from us and of a remote understanding of the world but a distinctive spokesman of our modern spirit." What, according to the author, was this modernness of Tagore? "I am here"—this was the central thought in Tagore which determined his significance for us. Our contemporaneity, Tagore's contemporaneity, reflected in the oriental form of his hymns, lay precisely in that he broke the bonds of individualism and merged not the world into himself but himself into the world.

But from these, on the whole correct position, Vengerova came to the rather unexpected conclusion that Tagore "most closely reminded us of Maeterlinck and the best symbolists of our or the most recent times." But Tagore's symbolism sometimes had merely a purely outer semblance with western symbolism and took its shape under the natural influence of centuries-old literary and philosophical tradition of India. Therefore, Vengerova's greatest error was to compare Tagore with Maeterlinck and, in particular, to draw parallel with his famous literary-philosophical work *The Treasure of the Humble*. There is really nothing in common here and as the Soviet literary critic, V. G. Tan Bogoraz, later wrote: "Compared with Tagore, Maeterlinck seems so affected, so unreal, and simply tidius and tiresome." The question here is not merely of Maeterlinck's affectation. His *Treasure of the Humble* asserted the helplessness of man before fate and had thus anti-humanist character. It alienated from life whereas, Tagore represented acceptance of life, a love of life. This the poetess herself admited when she pointed out that Tagore's work in its basis, was associated with currents different from world renouncing mysticism coming form the East.

Rightly pointing to the unification of two cultures in Tagore's work, Vengerova affirmed that "for him the truth was not in the aspirations of the will but in the light of his reminiscences...The religious fixedness of the East was a brilliant anti-thesis of the volitional gesture of our western world, its emotions and reflections in art." The critic would hardly have written these lines if she were aware of the fact of Tagore's participation in the Swadeshi movement and of his novel *Gora* then almost unknown outside Bengal. (The novel, *Gora*, published in Bengali in 1910,

was translated into English and then immediately into Russian only in 1924).

In conclusion it may be said that Vengerova virtually—and this is most valuable in her work–disrobed Tagore of the mantle of "patented mystic" and "true theosophist" which some contemporaries had tried to place on him. "We are prone to see in Tagore's work the revelations of the East to our West, pure and profound spiritualism of the Upanishads...undistorted utilitarian cult of comforting marvels of modern theosophists". Further, in her article, Vengerova gave a critical analysis of individual writings of Tagore, and also dwelt on his practical work and on the school established by him for the children. She showed with unexpected realism and insight how Tagore lived in conditions of colonial reality. When his European friends glorified in him the height of his mystical thoughts, he, with his ever characteristic irony, stopped them by saying : "For the political intelligence in India, I am simply a 'suspect' under No. so and so in police records." His political views were dangerous : the author of *Gitanjali* was in life a school teacher influencing the rising youth in a direction, perhaps not at all congenial for the then ruling powers.

Tagore's works continued to be published also in the subsequent years. His translation of Kabir's Poems came out in Russian rendering in 1916. New editions came out of *Gitanjali* which, just between the years 1913 and 1919, was published in Russian 15 times (not to speak of the numerous translation of individual poems in various journals), and of the *Gardener*, which, up to 1918, had been published in Russian eleven times.

Bikash Chakravarty

INCOMPLETE DIALOGUE : TAGORE AND POUND

On October 30, 1985, Ezra Pound completed his centenary ; on May 9, 1986, Rabindranath Tagore his 125th anniversary. Although the two poets knew each other closely at one stage of their lives, the story of their literary relation has not yet been fully told. When Tagore first met Pound in 1912, the latter was barely 26 and the first meeting for him almost immediately turned into a brief period of great ecstasy about the Indian poet. This part of the story is widely known and well documented by Pound himself in some of his letters to Miss Harriet Monroe, the then editor of *Poetry*, written during 1912-13 and now published in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound* (London 1971). What has not been adequately explained is the fact that Pound's first enthusiasm for Tagore waned rather too quickly and within a few months, his love and admiration changed into resentment and hostility. Of the five letters from Pound to Tagore that have survived in the holding of Rabindra-Bhavana at Santiniketan, three were written during Pound's 'Tagorean days' in 1912-13 and two during 1930-31. But while the first three letters shed some light of young Pound culture and society not yet disintegrated, the last two are merely cold and formal. Apart from the fact that they indirectly bear out the tone of the dark days of Pound's later career, these two letters hold no clue to his changed attitude towards Tagore.

Why did Pound turn against Tagore ? Dr. Sujit Mukherjee in his *Passage to America* (Calcutta 1964) says "With Pound—as with Yeats—it would seem that once Tagore had moved out of their protective shade, he had lost favour with them merely by

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having done so". It is difficult to accept this as an adequate explanation. I suggest that the explanation of Pound's changed attitude towards Tagore should be sought in the context of the former's changing pattern of aesthetics rather than in the literary politics of the day. However, exception must be made of the solitary instance in 1917, when Pound's impatience with Tagore exceeded all limits of literary considerations and found an outlet in a personal attack.

But more important than this we must firsttry to understand the nature of his spell of enchantment with Tagore in 1912-13. The essential question is: why did such a prominent maker of the high modernist mode in Anglo-American poetry as Ezra Pound fell so enthusiastic about Tagore's first translations into English ? In dealing with this question, I shall draw largely on Pound's letters, both published and unpublished. Unless otherwise indicated, the source of the quotation is some unpublished material in the holding of the *Poetry Magazine* Library, Chicago.

Ezra Loomis Pound (1885-1974) sailed for Europe from America in February 1908 and, after a brief stay in Venice, finally settled in London by the end of September. In January 1909, Pound came to know Olivia Shakespear and her daugher, Dorothy (whom he married in 1914). It was at Olivia Shakespear's that Pound met W.B. Yeats early in 1909—a meeting which developed into a lifelong friendship. Soon he started attending Yeats's Monday evenings at 18 Woburn Buildings and Earnest Rhys' evenings at Golden Threshold. But Pound's literary circle widened gradually to include not only Yeats, Rhys, Thomas Sturge Moore, or Laurence Binyon but also T. E. Hulme, Ford Madox Hueffer and Wyndham Lewis, F.S. Flint and Richard Aldington. By 1912, Pound had already established himself as a poet of some standing in London's literary world with six volumes of poetry to his credit. Collectively, these volumes reveal an Edwardian Pound with poems that would not offend the cultivated traditionalist taste of Robert Bridges, Sturge Moore, Rhys or, for that matter, Rabindranath Tagore. In fact, Pouud presented two of his early volumes, *Personae* (1909) and *Ripostes* (1912), to Tagore in 1912-13, which the latter is on record to have read appreciatively. But this is not the whole picture. At the same time, Pound was learning his first lessons in modernism at the Poet's Club sponsored by T.E. Hulme in 1909 and at the Eiffel Tower restaurant in Soho,

where Hulme assembled a group of young avant garde poets who met weekly to read and discuss poetry. Hulme apart, Pound was also learning from his regular meetings with Ford Madox Hueffer and Percy Wyndham Lewis and, all this led to the launching of Imagism as a literary movement by Ezra Pound sometime in the spring of 1912. Chicago *Poetry* announced the birth of this new school in its issue for November 1912. And the March 1913 issue printed the famous statement of Imagist aesthetic—the first public announcement of the programme—written by Pound and signed by F.S. Flint. That is, in 1912 we find Pound, the young expatriate poet, simultaneously involved in two literary generations.

When Tagore arrived in London on June 16, 1912 for his third and the most important of all his trips to the West, Pound was away in France, collecting material on troubadours; and when Pound returned to the city at the end of July, after an absence of three months, Tagore was in the country, where he spent almost the whole of August 1912. By August 1912, Pound must have heard of the Indian Poet from his literary friends in London, particularly from W.B. Yeats, who was doing the introduction and working on the manuscript of the English *Gitanjali*. Although Pound mentioned Tagore in his letter to Harriet Monroe, the editor of the Chicago based *Poetry* (Pound was its foreign correspondent in London) on September 24, 1902, telling her that he hoped to send some poems of "the very great Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore" for Poetry (*Selected Letters*), the two poets did not meet until October 2. On October 1, 1912, Pound wrote to Dorothy Shakespear: "I'm to meet Tagore tomorrow (*si fas est*") and added a postscript to this letter on October 4, saying : "These days have been as the weaver's shultle. I dined with Tagore on Wednesday (October 2)—discussed metres etc. Spent most of yesterday P.M. (2-6) with him. Discussing prosody, watching Rothenstein paint his portrait, listening to him read and sing. Have arranged to print six poems in '*Poetry*' unless somebody raises a fuss.... He is very fine and makes me feel like a painted pict with a stone war club. You have seen the eagle (Yeats) in a state of exultation over this matter and you may readily judge the condition of my lighter and more volatile spirits. I send this off before I go into another fit of meditation." (*Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear : Their Letters ; 1909-1914*; eds. Omar Pound

and A. Walton Litz, London, 1985)

As this letter shows, after the first meeting, Pound was immediately transported with a spell of enchantment, and the state continued for weeks till Tagore left for America on October 19, 1912. Dorothy called this Pound's 'Tagorean days' in her reply on October 5, to Pound's (*Letters : EP and Dorothy*). Richard Aldington, a close friend of Pound at that time and a co-promoter of the first phase of Imagism, tells the same story with a good deal of irony in his autobiography, *Life for Life's Sake* (New York, 1941) : "Another trying time was when the inner group of London literati decided to put over Tagore. Of course, he hit Yeats bang in the Blavatsky. Ezra too had a streak of superstition.... I wasn't allowed to see Tagore as being too profane; but I could always tell when Ezra had been seeing him, because he was so infernally smug."

However, the introductory note Pound sent along with the poems under the title, "*Tagore's Poems*" for *Poetry* was the first serious attempt at an appraisal of Tagore in the American world. In fact, between December 10912 and November 1913, Pound wrote three perceptive reviews of Tagore, the last two appearing in the March 1913 issue of *Fortnightly Review* ("Rabindranath Tagore") and in the November 1913 issue of the *New Freewoman*, respectively. Meanwhile, he also spoke on "Rabindranath Tagore" as part of a series of three lectures at Mrs. Eva Fowler's "new Chinese drawing room" at 26 Gilbert Street, Mayfair, on January 23, 1913 with copious illustrations from Tagore's newly made translations, 25 of which were sent to Pound from America by the post himself. (*Letters, EP* and *Dorothy*). In short, till the publication of *The Gardener* in October 1913 and Pound's review of the book under the title "*Tagore's Second Book into English*" in *New Freewoman* for November 1913, Pound showed an exceptionally intelligent interest in Tagore's poetry and in Tagore *qua* poet, although his first enthusiasm about the Tagor cult or about the role of Tagore as a religious teacher started waning by April, 1913.

By late October 1912, Pound dispatched six poems from the still unpublished English *Gitanjali* (the India Society edition came out on November 1, 1912) to Harriet Monroe for *Poetry*. He was delayed, because, as he told Miss Monroe in an undated letter, "Yeats seems to have the only correct copy of the proofs off in the

country with him. I enclose a note from Rothenstein....which contains all I can tell about how soon I'll be able to send you the text. "Miss Monroe acknowledged the receipt of the poems in her letter to Pound on November 9, 1912 and the poems were duly published in *Poetry* for December, 1912. The *Poetry* text suggests that Pound did not probably get the corrected proofs and, so transcribed from the Rothenstein manuscript version with some minor changes, especially, in punctuation.

Tagore stayed in America for about six months, and when he returned to London on April 19, 1913, Pound, as in the summer of 1912, was away from the city, this time in Venice, and they did not meet again until June for the second spell of Tagore's stay in England. By this time Pound's ecstasy about the Indian poet was already on the wane, although he kept himself posted with Tagore's western career all these months. The reports of his lectures on religion and philosophy in America and England provoked Pound into some derogatory remarks about Tagore in private letters. On April 22, 1913, Pound told making Harriet Monroe; "As a religious teacher he—Tagore—is superfluous. We have got Lao-Tse. And his philosophy hasn't much in it for a man who has felt the pangs or been pestered with Western civilization." (*Selected Letters*). And when Dorothy informed him on May 6, 1913 of the series of lectures Tagore was to give at the Caxton Hall, London, between May 19, and June 16, Pound quickly replied from Venice : "May 8, 1913—I am fed up with Tagore. I wish he'd get thru' lecturing before I get back. I don't want to be any more evangelised than I am already-which is too dam' much." (*Letters, EP and Dorothy*)

It is important to note that in spite of his downright denunciation of Tagore as a religious prophet, Pound remained deeply interested in Tagore's poetry. In point of fact, the three essays he wrote in 1912-13, were laudable attempts at rehabilitating the essential poet in Tagore, extricating him from the clouds of mysticism and piety. In all of these he was looking for the principles of poetry he was himself concerned with at the time (1912-13) and, for the qualities he considered essential for the modernisation of poetry. The brief essay he wrote for *Poetry* in December 1912 dealt with the prose tradition in poetry, finding in Tagore's translations, among other things, 'the sound-unit principle of the most advanced artists in *vers libre*'. In the *Fortnightly* Review

article of March 1913 Pound turned to the question of language of the original, its fluidity and flexibility, declaring that 'all this makes for precision'. The point is taken up in some detail in the third and the last essay in the *New Freewoman* for November 1913, where he proposed: "Let us clear away the rubbish. Let me deny that Mr. Tagore is, in any exact sense, a mystic. Let us confine ourselves to a consideration of his art, as such and as such sufficient. Finally, quoting a whole poem from *The Gardener*, Pound concluded that Tagore gave 'us pure Imagism'.

Pound made his position clear in a letter to Harriet Monroe sometime in June 1913. There he says: "(Floyd) Dell is dead right about Tagore, the point is that Tagore is in some poems not only an artist but an imagist, in a lot of the stuff he is, exactly as Dell says, only a mystic. This part of his work does not much interest me. I have done what I could to keep him from printing much of it as it will undoubtedly lower his literary standing.... In my Fortnightly article I tried as far as possible to criticise him as an artist, I think hardly any-one else has done so.... I don't in the least mean to minimise Tagore, but there is a point where he stops being poet and becomes priest and preacher, which is all well and good, but which does not concern the artist, or the critic of letters. As mystic, Tagore is, what you like, but he must be judged as mystic not as poet. No, Dell happens to be right, perhaps infelicitous in his expression. Tagore's great gift to us is his emotional consciousness of nature. That is poetic, and it is poetically, and I think adequately expressed in some of the lyrics. Hence I believe him a very great artist.... I think Tagore cares more for 'spiritual life' than for 'Art'. This is a bad way to put it and his sense of values is doubtless correct, but if you set out to be a saint that is enough, you mustn't expect 'points' in the other races because you happen to be running in that one. Do try to see what I am driving at...."

What he was driving at was a precise distinction between the poet in the Imagist model and the mystic. At least, Pound did not confuse poetry with mysticism as so many English and American reviewers of the English *Gitanjali* did during the pre-war years. In his appraisal of Tagore, he consistently stressed the issues of style, precision, the prose tradition and the principles of the Imagist poetry. If Tagore failed him later, it was not because Pound changed his aesthtic principles, but because he found Tagore's

later translations to be increasingly dominated by excessive piety and religious feeling obscuring the essential poetry. Hence his broadside in a letter to Iris Bury on January 25, 1917 : "Tagore got the Nobel Prize because, after the cleverest boom of our day, after the fiat of the omnipotent literati of distinction, he lapsed into religion and optimism and was boomed by the pious non-conformists." (*Selected Letters*)

Up to this point in the chronology of Pound-Tagore literary relation, the story runs on a fairly intelligible line. What beats us is Pound's next venture, an amazingly slanderous piece, which he published in the May 1917 issue of *The Little Review* under the title, "*Jodindranath Mawhwor's Occupation*". On reading this, one wonders how Ezra Pound, whom T. S. Eliot in 1922 would call '*il miglior fabbro*' could stoop to such meanness. The article at once elicited sharp protest from Harriet Monroe who charged Pound with 'bad taste' and deplored the 'dullness of (his) slam at Tagore' in her letter of July 3, 1917. Pound tried to defend himself in his reply on July 23, saying that "when a man descends from Yeats to Evelyn Underhill one is not obliged to go on booming him. He (Tagore) has lost his literary integrity". Then he added : "Tagore's decadence is a fine object lesson for what happens when an amiable person sets out to give the people what it wants, even unconsciously. His best beloved disciples, even Mr. Rothenstein who brought him from India, has publishers here etc. all sit round ringing their hands and hoping he we will stop." And finally, "My Jodindra wasn't particularly Rabby. It is simply the Orient."

In his reply, Pound spoke some hard truths about Tagore's English career, but as a defence of the article, his arguments are simply unacceptable. In fact, the article can at best be dismissed as something written in a moment of aberration. Two months later, Pound again took up Tagore in *The Little Review* for August 1917. This time he was reviewing *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* and rather unexpectedly turns to Tagore betraying a tone of in jured righteousness. "If I dispraise Tagore now, I can only say that I was among the first to praise him before he became a popular fad. The decadence of Tagore can be measured. His first translations were revised by W.B. Yeats; later translations by Evelyn Underhill; and now they say he has taken to writing in English, a language for which he has

no special talent . . Praise was rightly given to his first poems because it was demonstrated and demonstratable that they were well done in Bengali.... The unimportant element, that which has made Tagore the prey of religious nincompoops, might easily have passed without comment. However, it has proved the bacillus of decay.... He might still wash and be clean; that is to say there is still time for him to suppress about three-fourths of the stuff he has published in English, and retain some sort of literary position."

Needless to say, Tagore did not pay heed to Pound's advice and after 1917, Pound never returned to the question of Tagore, not at least publicly, excepting two brief occasions in 1959 when he referred to Tagore of 1912 in a mood of reminiscence in a letter to Amiya Chakravarty and during a visit from Krishna Kripalani at Rapallo. On Tagore's part, there is no evidence that he ever cared to read Pound's later poetry. Late in life, in an appraisal of modern Anglo-American poetry, written in 1932. Tagore summarily dismissed the poetry of both Pound and Eliot as drab, dry and deliberately ugly. For Tagore, Pound did not matter.

In 1920, Pound moved to Paris and later in the decade, to Rapallo, snapping all his ties with the old world of pre-war years. Although he wrote at least twice to Tagore during this period and met him at least once in Paris in 1930. Pound's literary relation with Tagore had broken. With Pound now entering into a disintegrating universe of obsession and aberrations and Tagore growing into an internaticbrity, the dialogue faded into unceremonious silence.

Jagdish Shivpuri

TAGORE AND ANAND

Tagore was born within the vicious circle of a society which frowned upon radical talk. (Homage to Tagore, page 10). The intelligentsia was frustrated by the glittering superficialities of Edwardian and Georgian eras. Tagore convinced the Indian people of the possibility of a renaissance, and then took them to it. He borrowed his lyric forms by going back for inspiration to the rich arts and literatures of our village tradition. Thus he extended, individually, the acquisition of a whole community. We were shown the manner and the method of the struggle of the Indian people, and Tagore boldly overcame the isolation which his aristocratic birth and reputation had imposed on him. Anand says, "He caught Bengal in the grip of that peculiar moral tension which has arisen among us, through the clash of two dominant traditions, the incoming hedonism of the West and the various strands and customs of our own society. That is to say, he showed how the individual in the modern sense began to arise in our society" (Homage to Tagore, page 21). He evolved an emotive prose style as against a style of recitation. He was the first novelist in the modern sense to show that the novel was not just a *katha*. "Alone among our nineteenth century writers he shows a sense of humour in the midst of tragedy". But his lack of vigour is equally a truth. "He was a pilgrim who carried a great deal of luggage on his back, souvenirs from our long past, mementos, charms, tokens, etc." (Anand).

Anand as a novelist wanted to make a fresh beginning. Just

as a human baby goes through all the stages of evolution before being born (at times it looks like a tadpole, at others like a lizard), Anand's writing goes through all the past evolutionary forms before they are born. There is a great difference between their temperaments—"Tagore is a romantic contemplative who seems to be compelled from within him to love and be loved" (Mulk Raj Anand, Lecture delivered on the 24th February, 1966 at M. S. University, Baroda and later published under the title "The Volcano" by the University, page 6). Anand is a believer in Heroism, even if that makes him a little sentimental at times. This belief in Heroism is explained in his *Apology for Heroism*. Heroism is the infinite resilience of the human soul in times of crisis. It is a belief that struggle is natural and it does not interest itself in what the bourgeois intellectuals prefer art as decoration.

The differences in their personalities are created by the peculiar characteristics of the environment in which they were born. In *Apology for Heroism* there is an exposition of the similarities as well as the dissimilarities between them :

> ....Throughout my own life, I have been addicted to the ideal of Protagoras (500 B.C.) : "Man is the measure of all things." And even when I met parallels of Indian idealism in the Socratic dialogues of Plato, I was inclined to ignore them and preferred to read Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Aristophanes. But my mere debt to Europe does not invalidate the beauty of this ideal which Asia had accepted, just as Eastern religions, especially Christsanity, did not become debased when Europe accepted them. Nor is humanism entirely new to Asia, if we remember Buddha, Nanak and Kabir, Ali Sher Naswai and the Chinese sages of the 15th century. And as for a modern statement I could hardly do better than quote the words of the Bengali poet-saint Chandidas :
>
> *Listen, O brother man,*
> *Man is the supreme truth*
> *For there is no higher....*
>
> The humanism which I prefer does not rest on a Divine Sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhi or Tagore for instance... (Pages 140-41)

Tagore was dominantly an imagist. "I think, one could say, that all his art was mainly expressionist in this manner. He enters the bondage of human affections and sees that 'the great is to be found in the small, the infinite within the bounds of form, the eternal freedom of the soul in love" (Mulk Raj Anand, Lecture, M. S. University, 24.2. 1966). When Tagore said that "the function of our soul is to fraternise with others", he was talking of a brotherhood of which all the great religions of the world have spoken. When Anand talks of Fraternity, Equality and Liberty are implied because he is talking in terms of the French Revolution. Tagore sees his God "in the tiller tilling the soil", the condition of the tiller he leaves to political revolutionaries. To study agricultural economics and then apply it to the human element in agriculture is not a poet's job; Anand had actually taken adult education classes in the slums of London and had gone to fight like Malraux in the Spanish Civil War. It is not a matter of temperament but belief. Tagore did understand the very big landscape of the family and in the first week of every month gave account to his father. The credit of pulling the family out of an immense debt goes to him. In "Sahitya Pathe" Tagore says, "Art and Literature belong to the revolutionary region of freedom, where need is reduced to unimportance, the material is shown to be unsubstantial and the ideal alone is revealed as Truth". The *Ananda* of the Upanishads is the harmony of the inner man with the outer man, according to Tagore. For Tagore, the shapes of outward things are just facts which fail to convey their personalities. But there is a kind of humanism in Tagore which brings his romanticism closer to classicism. In "Sahitya" on page 29 Tagore says : "My main point is this : the world of literature means a world in relationship with the human life.... We humanise great nature by mixing with it our joys and sorrows, hopes and desires; only then it becomes proper material for literature". Locke had said, "Our business here is not to know all things but those which concern our conduct." As late as 1719 Abbe du Bo's could write with reasonable representativeness: "The landskip, were it even Titian's or Caraccios, does not affect us. The most knowing painters have been so thoroughly convinced of this truth, that it is rare to find any mere landskips of theirs without an intermixture of figures". For a long time Humanism was a word used for Classicism itself. Santayana has

defined Classicism as the idealization of the familiar. Tagore says, "In literature man is really extending his field of what is dear to him, that is the field of his distinct realisation" ("The Religion of an Artist", *Vishwa Bharti*, p. 13). Another example which Tagore gives reminds us of Classicism : "Our living body has its vital organs that are important in maintaining its efficiency but this body is not a mere convenient sack for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brain : it is an image—its image—its highest value is in the fact that communicates, its personality.

This concept of Personality found everywhere in Tagore is a very wide concept. Every object has a personality. In terms of Western philosophy it comes closest to Kant's thing in itself. The personality of every object is the mysterious inexplicable element of the object. But, in spite of Tagore's belief that communication is one of the primary wages of Man, he, in the words of Mulk Raj Anand, "introduced asceticism as the ideal method for realising works of art, this removing aesthetic joy from the uprush of the consciousness, the bursting of energies and vitalities as well as delight in sensuous experience or the ordinary pleasure, raising the concept of beauty to the transcendental plane of Rasa as the universalized, disinterested, emotional essence to be tasted through intriction" (The Volcano, M. S. University, page 17).

That all the repressed energies of the great artist rushed up when he started using the brush, is what Mulk Raj Anand has tried to explain in his lecture, "The Volcano". Tagore was one of the greatest writers of his time. He was in many ways close to W. B. Yeats, who wrote the Introduction to *Gitanjali*, just as Mulk Raj Anand is close to James Joyce. These two Indian writers are close to these two Irish writers. After all India is very close to Ireland. (An Irish teacher had an important place in the Tagore family !) Tagore's critical detachment is revealed in his self-mockery in his satirical novel, "Sesher Kavita" (Last Poem) quoted on page 25 of the "The Volcano" (Mulk Raj Anand's lecture on his paintings). "My second contention against the poet, Tagore, is that his creations, even like his handwriting, are full of curves and remind one of roses and female forms and floating moons ! Primitive ! Trying so to copy nature's idioms. For the new literary dictator, we expect creation, straight and sharp like thorns, like arrows, like spear-heads. Not like fragile

flowers, but like the lighting flash and the pain of neuralgia, piercing and angular, like a Gothic church, not rounded like a mosque dome, not self-complacement but aggressive, even if they be crude like a jute mill, like a government secretariat. Let us disenchant ourselves from the witchery of musical forms."

All this remarkable and cruel self-criticism applies as much to Yeats' early work as to Tagore's. But he announced a new gospel in an essay, bequeathed a new vision born out of experience to his children :

> When in the name of Indian art, we cultivate with deliberate aggressiveness a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our soul under idiosyncracies unearthed from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the everchanging play of life.

Not only this, one of his greatest achievements as a master is the guideline he has left behind in "The Meaning of Art" for the new generation :

> I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny the obligation to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art, according to some old mannerisms. Let them proudly refuse to be herded into a pen like brand beasts that are treated as cattle and not as cows.
> (*Vishva Bharti Quarterly*, April 1926)

The conscious internationalism of Art was something which Tagore and Tagore alone could do. And this made it possible for Mulk Raj Anand to open a new door. Mulk Raj Anand has called Tagore "our one and only Romantic". This is true only in that sense in which he has presented his views. Tagore was a Romantic by temperament, he believed in the fact that individual imagination of the poet transformed everything and this subjective vision combined with a deep nostalgia for the past. But if we leave his paintings and a few books produced at the end of his life, he was always searching for order and harmony. And even then, he ignored form, because formalism of any kind was not acceptable to him. This is again very Romantic. He derived his image from private association generally, though he also

wrote great poems like "Alakh Niranjan" in which he celebrated the fight of the Sikhs against the invaders. His impression in popular memory is of a poet in whose mind "the sweet song of the kokil at the end of the day evokes visions of broken staircases at the village pond." There is also an irrepressible element of of allegory. Though he thinks in images, yet the images are symbols and action is gesture. In all this he reveals the land-marks observed during his journey into the interior—like all great poets he has a formlessness which is almost Romantic, but approximate to the Upanishadic form, howsoever subconsciously. The continuity with the past is not partisan; it is non-chronological. The seers of the Upanishads are not located in historical time.

Anand's approach is clearly, boldly and directly time-bound, as stated in *Apology for Heroism*, (Mayfair Paperbacks, 1975). It seemed to him that "the historical approach was the best yard-stick." And further : "At the risk of seeming obvious, I may say that the answers to these questions could not be given from an abstract analysis of the motives of human behaviour and psychology, as if human nature were an unchanging, timeless entity. This would only lead to a flatulent grandiloquence about eternal moods embodying nothing, except that some minute and spurious truism about one or two intense moments might result from the metaphysical wrappings of dissociated states of awareness" (page 99).

The twentieth century is a great turning point in human history. And though our main struggle remains the search for values, in so far as these are increasingly open to re-interpretation and discussion,

> it is necessary to explore the sensibilities of all human beings, whether in the factory, in the village square or in the drawing room, in so far as they have been affected by the 'iron' age. This does not necessarily mean a departure from imaginative creation to didacticism. Rather does it mean the introduction into creative narrative of whole new people who have seldom entered the realms of literature in India. (page 119)

In Traditional Absolutism of the Hindus "there seemed to be at least two different species of desires, high and low, the reflections

of the self-will of those who aim at Union with God through the battles of the mind, or through propitiation of priests, and the small desires of those who wanted to escape from the miseries of the earthly state, such as poverty, disease, and frustation. And, apparently, a man who docilely accepted his position within the framework of traditional Hindu caste society, however low and humiliating that position, was a good citizen, whereas those who consciously questioned tradition and suffered uuwillingly were moral lepers. So this was man ! Bound up in the life of personality, weak and poor, and dwarfed into insignificance, eternally afraid of the proud privilege he had lost when God split himself into the Universe, and introduced the element of desire in his creatures, limited and humiliating, circumsbried in every way" (pages 69-70).

The general strike of 1926—the "angry summer"—had made it clear to Anand that in times of crisis, democracy became a sham word. The British became as shamelessly brutal at home as they had been in the colonies. "The chief failure of democracy lay in the incapacity of the electorate to control the acts of its elected representatives once it had put them in power. Gandhi in his pamphlet 'Hind Swaraj' had called parliamentary democracy a prostitute."

The Renaissance humanism had placed its faith in the human faculty called Reason. The eighteenth century, as Whitehead said, was an age of reason based upon faith—a faith in the order of nature, of the universal frame. Robert Bridges says in "The Testament of Beauty" something which the Classicists of the 18th century and the Romantics of the 19th century believed with equal vehemence :

> *The wise will live by Faith,*
> *Faith in the order of Native and that her order is good.*
> (Lines 562-63)

Rabindranath has faith in Man but is guided by the belief that the order of Nature is good, just like Bridges. He really corresponds in his nature to Yeats. Both were mystics but still dreamt of Intellect as the prime moving force. Yeats is reported to have given as much importance to "blood" as to "intellect". Both Yeats and Rabindranath deeply respected Custom ;

Ceremony's a name for the rich horn
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

Just as the rationalism of Yeats's father and the aftermath of the Darwinian controversy had precluded him from accepting orthodox Christianity, the Brahmo Samaj views of Rabindranath's father prevented him from straying in beaten tracks. Both were capable of becoming sentimental—a good example being Yeats. "Wishes for the clothes of Heaven," but while Yeats was lured by Fascism, Rabindranath remained humanist. And as he was disillusioned he has greater and greater hope in India :

> It is no longer possible for us to retain any respect for that mockery of civilization which believes in ruling by force and has no faith in freedom at all....Today my one last hope is that the deliverer will be born in this poverty-stricken country.

Anand says on page 87 of *Apology for Heroism*, "I had found that those very people who were the real custodians of European culture, the intelligentisa, were betraying it, by accepting defeats at the hands of the manoeuvring party politicians, and by devoting themselves to their own petty concerns, be those egotistical self-realization, salvation, or poetry and art as mere forms of selfish amusement". And further, "It seemed to me, through my association with Indian and Chinese friends, that the intelligentsia in Asia had already moved ahead of European intellectual circles in the realization both of a sense of locality and a wider, more human outlook. In fact, the renaissance now possessed Asia and Africa" (page 89).

Anand in one article on Rabindranath Tagore has defined the function of fiction : "Imaginative fiction, whether it be the short piece or the novel is perhaps better fitted even than autobiography to mirror the private history of an age, to record the inner human adjustments to which didacticism supplies such cumbersome footnotes." In the same article he tells us that Rabindranath attempted to study the conflict of new thought and dead habit. In his first novel *The Bride's Fair* the rejection of Life as Maya is accepted. Even the European narratives he accepted at this time were of the symbolic kind, according to his

own description. He had developed an "I" mind as distinct from the "We" mind of the community to which he belonged, he was responsible for his opinions. As Tagore matures symbolism, he becomes less and less explicit and more and more a part of the woof and texture of the novel itself, says Anand. He was able to avoid the pitfalls of Realism in the sense in which that doctrine implied a hypnotic preoccupation of the writer with isolated facts of material or sensational order. But though Rabindranath has a profound instinct as a novelist, he sometimes prevents himself from outraging the sentiments of Bengali society. Formally by the time Tagore comes to *The Wreck*, the construction becomes firm yet delicate and without any decorative asides. He reflects outside influences in *The Wreck*, without straining the real life of Bengal for the so-called universal ends of great literature. Then comes *Gora*, with its obviovs affinities with Turgenev, a writer much neglected by our generation. *Gora* is a juvenescently intense novel.

In *The Home and the World* we have Tagore's usual brilliant portraits of women but though the moral ideas are absorbed in the narrative generally, yet sometimes this novel seems to be dominated by them. Nikhil's remark to his wife, "Why not try to build something ? You should not waste a tenth part of your energies in the destructive element," appears peculiary Victorian to the modern reader. It reveals in Anand's words, "the embarrassment of the aristocracy which still harboured illusions about the magnanimity of Proclamation from Delhi."

The atmosphere of *Broken Ties* is Dostoevskian. Tagore rejects rejection and defects finally to the land of human passions. He finally proves that humanism in his case may be conditioned by an outside God but certainly it is not determined by such a belief.

The difference in the personalities of Tagore and Anand is the difference which we generally find between Father and Son. Naturally it becomes a difference between two generations. Tagore was a young overprotected child from one of the richest families in Bengal, but he never enjoyed the love of parents and was a victim of what he has called Servocracy in *Reminiscenes*. The children were brought up almost ascetically : in winter they had two tunics, instead of one and had breakfast of simple luchies and molasses. The father was almost a hermit. Tagore had

been born in a large family but there was no child of his age-group. He says in *Reminiscences*, "Had I been able to associate with the other boys, the woes of learning might not have seemed so intolerable. But that turned out to be impossible—so nasty were most of the boys in their manners and habits" (Page 33). His mother was so busy with the household that she could hardly get time to be with her children. When she had to go for her dip in the Ganges, she was taken in a closed palanquin and the palanquin itself was dipped in the Ganges several times, so strict was the purdah system in the aristocratic families of Bengal. Of course, the family had been associated with the ruling classes for a long time and sustained carefully a living contact with England. That Tagore took the best of his surroundings and moulded himself into a state of intense moral responsibility only shows the great force of his genius.

Mulk Raj Anand was born in a family of poor coppersmiths, but many of his ancestors were renowned craftsmen. His father worked for the military where he was respected. His uncle used to eat meat and drink invariably on Ekadashi days. His playmates were sweepers and the other boys. The hero of *Untouchable* is drawn after the sweeper boy with whom he had played. He started taking part in agitations against the British Government and received seven strips. After the police had caned him, his mother pounced on them like a hungry tigress and started beating them. He wos loved deeply by everybody and was brought up almost beneath the sky. His restlessness never allowed him to stay at one place for long. Surrounded by the cantonment areas and very poor children, he was the apple of the eye of almost everybody. His mother's father had a reputation as a fighter against the British and she came from Daska, a place near the village of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal.

The differences of their work can be best explained by the differences in their childhood and background.

Having shared the joys and sorrows of the lowest class, Anand detached himself storing safely in his memory what he had known and transforming it by the fire of his soul. Like Joyce he wove symbols which almost became emblems. For example in *Seven Summers*, the study of childhood, he rushes to the garden of roses to pluck a rose against the injunctions of his mother,

While returning with his hands pricked by thorns, his legs intertwine and he falls. When he wakes up in the arms of his father in the afternoon, the rosebud is still clutched tight in his fist. In *Confession of a Lover*, waiting for Yasmin's arrival he plucks a lotus, which is still in his hand when he regains consciousness after having heard of her murder. The Indian critics have never read him properly and he is not to be studied for a programme but for joy. To repeat, he has done to the English novel the same thing which Joyce had done. He has an inherent sense of formless form. Forster said in his Preface to *Untouchable* : "The book is planned simply, but it has form." Elizabeth Bowen, another master of form in modern English fiction, said : "Anand's writing has an attractive sensuous quality : he somehow charges his pages with heat, colour, scents" *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1, Spring 1977, Kakatiya University, Warangal, India, page 77).

Untouchable reveals that the insider turned outsider alone can see the landscape from the true perspective. Tagore reinterpreted the great Upanishadic tradition and the tradition of Kalidas, enriching it in the process of extensions. Mulk Raj Anand tested the wisdom of the heart of Indian folk in the cultural life of Europe for over two decades, then returned to his country and added its fresh images and nascent modernity in the music of the "naive" poet's journeys across the seven seas.

Anand shares with his spiritual father the Indian capacity for full confrontation with life. But while the father retains the romantic aspiration to a golden age, the son, with his Punjabi biorythms, discards the inherited romanticism to face the *Kaliyug* in all its miseries, struggles and resilient humanness, convinced that men can emerge from the breakdowns, the disruption and the decay without reviving the formulas of the past. Both father and son accept the Himalayas and ths Alps. The son, however, ascends Mount Snowden, the Irish hill, the Urals, the mountains of Sinkiang, and as well, wandering towards red suns, beyond the Gayatri hymn, as though every morning sun in every landscape is the first sun of the world. The father gave up his nostalgia for harmony at the end of his life and created the nightmare world of his paintings, to suggest that he could expiate the past. The son who had gone away on his quest beyond the Advaita inheritance, came back to Shantiniketan for a while,

like a prodigal child, and embraced the father for facing the truth of life at the end after all, even if it was in the beauty of ugliness. Anand's departure point is in the landscape of Tagore's paintings, in so far as they are akin to the surrealists, the German expressionists and Picasso.

J. P. Savita

GITANJALI AND THE *PSALTER*

Most readers approach Tagore in much the same way as they visit an historical monument, say, the Taj at Agra. Much has already been heard and read about it. The visitor's head is full of the love-legend of Mumtaj and Shah Jahan and, may be that famous poem by Sahir Ludhianwi. He does not let the *actual* Taj disturb his mental picture. The critical faculty needed to make an accurate assessment of its architectural beauty is laid at rest and the visitor returns home only to infect others with the pseudo—sentimental virus—his wah-wahs and ah-ohs. Similarly when one opens a book by Tagore, specially *Gitanjali*, one becomes aware that he is in the awe-inspiring prescnce of Gurudev. That imposing prophet-like portrait—dreamy eyes, flowing beard, toe-deep cloak and all that—is all the Time in his mind. He knows that the book in his hand is the one, and so far the only one in the Indian sub-continent, to have won the much coveted Nobel Prize. Here is something that could leave W. B. Yeats spell-bound, something that earned encomiums in superlatives from such luminaries as C.F. Andrews, Romain Rolland and Albert Sweitzer. It *must be* great stuff.

Great stuff no doubt it is and merits therefore proper understanding and not just getting sentimental about. But then, to understand is harder than to celebrate. "To know Tagore" says Prof. Sisirkumar Ghose, "one has to be educated and that is a terribly difficult thing".[1]

It has become almost customary, for example, to treat Tagore as a kind of ambassador plenipotentiary and let the matter rest

there. Convinced as he was of the value and validity of the spiritual ideals set forth in the ancient classics of India and nursed as he was on the verses of the Upanishadas and the teachings of Buddha, he through his *Gitanjali*, flung open the gates of the treasure-house of our spiritual heritage for the Western public to see and gape at. The danger involved in this 'Window on the East' approach is that it tends to reduce him to an Eastern mystic out to dazzle the Western world while neglecting the other equally (if not more) important aspects of his personality. Those who go ga-ga over Tagore, the Oriental mystic, often forget that he was after all a product of Anglo–India. An Indian educated by European methods, he had read his Romantics and Victorians. Echoes of Wordsworth and Shelley, Tennyson and Browning are clearly audible in *Gitanjali*. So are those of the King James's Bible. In fact all his works show the traces of Western and Christian influence as well as of his own India which no doubt predominate.

It will be equally erroneous to agree with those Westerners who had tried to identify Tagore's poetry and message with the teachings of the Christian church and to whom he seemed to be "more Christian than Christians". Look at what the Baptist Times (dt. 13.2.1914) wrote about the author of *Gitanjali* : ....We have been waiting anxiously for some indication of the effect of Christian ideas on a truly representative Hindu mind. Here surely is the person we have been longing for, one sent before the chariot of the Lord to make His path straight. And when we remember that this poet's every word is eagerly caught up by the waiting millions, may not venture to assert that the new, the Christian India is already at the door.[2]"

All this may be dismissed as gross exaggeration but the fact that the Christian Gospel did influence Tagore, cannot be wholly ruled out. In Song No. 54 for example the words of the girl on the well pouring water from her jar on the joined palms of the tired traveller, recall the story of Christ who on his way to crucifixion was given water by a woman devotee. There is an eloquent statement in one of the poems about the divine declaration : The kingdom of God is within you.

> The traveller has to knock at every door to come to his own.
>
> *Gitanajli–20*

Of course the songs of *Gitanjali* were originally composed in Tagore's native Bengali but into the translation—and it is Tagore's own translation—he deftly wove many a Biblical phrase and expression. The very tone, the very diction and texture bear, through and through, a strange family-likeness with those of the Authorised Version.

And above all is the Psalter* or the Book of Psalms, the 19th in the order of books of the Old Testament. No book of Scriptures has been held by the Christians in higher or more general estimation; none has been more frequently and extensively employed in divine service, popular exposition or private meditation. It consists of inspired hymns and songs, meditations and prayers, chiefly of David. These lyrics of the sweet singers of Israel, these relics of the Hebrew muse are simple in structure, exquisite in language and striking in imagery. Lyrical or didactic, jubliant or elegiac, retrospective or prophetic, they are the beautiful creations of impassioned genius and teeming with all the contagious ardour of Eastern minstrelsy. It was natural for Tagore to turn instinctively (even calculatingly) to these hymns (in their English form) as a model for the translation of his song offerings.

"As we read these pieces" wrote the Times Literary Supplement (dt. 7.12.1912) about Tagore's songs, "we seem to be reading the psalms of David of our times". Ezra Pound who had had the highest brow in the English literary world also found in them "the same happiness as in some of the psalms"[3] The songs in Gitanjali are "a pageant of THEE and ME". So are the Psalms. But Tagore's God is very different from the rather fierce of God of the ancient Hebrews. In the Psalms God is repeatedly invoked in such words as :

> Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly. Psalm 6–(10)
>
> Arise, O Lord, in thine anger; lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies; and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded. Psalm 7–(6)

Tagore's God, on the other hand, is a benevolent Providence.

* a term derived from the word psaltry—a musical instrument used to accompany these hymns or psalms when sung.

This led (or should we say misled ?) some foreigners to dub Tagore as "the poet of lotus eaters and opium smokers; of those who lose themselves in the ecstasy of Nirvana."[4] In *Gitanjali*, relationship of God and man has been looked at from different points of view. They have been conceived as Master and Servant, Lover and Beloved, Boatsman and Traveller, Father and Son. What an enviable God, this God of Tagore is—the Great Friend, the Beloved, the Lotus flower, the Unknown Man playing lute yonder in the river. The whole book rings with a joy and affirmation, over-stepping all limitations of race and creed. It embraces the whole gamut of tender feelings and emotions—love, devotion, despondency, humility and gratitude. If God is invoked and He is invoked so often—it is not to shame or vex or slay the enemies but :

> Let only that little of my fetters be left whereby I am bound with thy will, and thy purpose is carried out in my life—and that is the fetter of love. *Gitanjali*–34

Of course *Gitanjali* has its agony no less than its ecstasy, but the characteristic tone is always the same :

> Send thy angry storm, dark with death, if it is thy wish, and with lashes of lightning startle the sky from end to end.
>
> But call back, my lord, call back this pervading silent heat, still and keen and cruel, burning the heart with dire despair.
>
> Let the cloud of grace bend low from above like the beautiful look of the mother on the day of the father's wrath. *Gitanjali*–40

It is at the stylistic level that the English *Gitanjali* and the *Psalter* in the Authorised Version, are close cousins. Now both are translations from the original. The American poet Robert Frost is alleged to have said somewhere that poetry is what gets lost in translation. In the translated form Tagore's songs (so we are told by knowledgeable persons like Budhdev Bose and Nirad C. Choudhry) have lost much of their original fervour. However

much we may admire the English *Gitanjali* as a miracle of translation, Tagore here is only a shadow of his real self. The Song Offerings are more of song in the original and more of offerings in English.

May be, but the fact is that in his translations Tagore was attempting something new. All the time he had his eye upon the Western audience. What could be a better model than the Bible and there too the Psalm, which, he knew so well, were for the Christians like their daily bread. And in respect of his prospective Nobel Prize winner he would take no chance. He would translate it himself. And what a translation it turned out to be! In place of the sing-song rhythm, he succeeded in forging out a chantable prose similar to that of the songs and hymns in the Bible. It is an incantatory rhythmic prose, a fluent, measured, well modulated diction. The nearest parallel in Western literature are the poems of Walt Whitman, the national bard of America. The ictus of poetry is unmistakably there. Tagore succeeded in his mission. The English *Gitanjali* took the Western world by the storm and earned for its author the highest literary award in the world. By now the book has been translated into almost all the languages of the civilised world. In fact it is one of those rare world books which have been able to bear the strain of double translation wonderfully well.

> Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it with ever fresh life.

Thus opens *Gitanjali*. It is Tagore speaking or David of the Psalms who sings:

> Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.
>
> Psalm 4-(7)

or

> Thou hast proved mine heart, thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me and shalt find nothing....
>
> Psalm 17-(14)

One of the structural characteristics of Hebrew poetry (and which is common to all the prophets) is parallelism, i.e. lines almost the same in length. The first clause expresses a thought or an emotion, but the second dwells upon it and utters it with some variations of words or emphasis, or having expressed a sentiment there may be a revulsion and a contrast, and then the second clause may be in anti-thesis to the first; or it may, in various ways, work out an idea by a series of utterances and images. This *Gitanjali* shares with the Psalms. To the ultra-modernists (in whose estimation poetry was born with Eliot's 'Waste Land') such parallelisms seem over simpified. "There was not enough of mystery about them" says one of Tagore's derogators, "lesser still the joy of discovery. What had already been said in the joy of discovery. What had already been said in one staaza had merely been repeated in five others in a round-about way." He dismissed them as "hollow mouthfuls, high sounding utterances."[5] One might as well call the Sermons on the Mount "hollow mouthfuls."

Mark again, the mocking ironical tone of *Psalm*–3 :

> May there be which say of my soul; There is no help for him in God, Selah.

Now compare it with that of Song 41 of *Gitanjali* :

> Men going home glance at me and smile and fill me with shame.

The very similes in both the books resemble each other. One example will suffice :

> I am poured like water, all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
>
> My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and those hast brought me into the dust of death. Psalm 22–(14–15)

I am like a remnant of a cloud of autumn uselessly roaming in the sky, O my sun ever-glorious ! Thy touch has not yet melted my vapour, making me one with thy light, and thus I count months and years separated from thee. *Gitanjali*–80

One of the stylistic devices found often in ancient literature is the question–answer technique. This we come across in the *Psalms*:

Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing ?

The kings of earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed saying. Psalm 2-(1–2)

This technique we come across in *Gitanjali* also :

'Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you ?'

'It was my master,' said the prisoner. *Gitanjali*–31

Also mark the similarity among the questions in the following extracts from both books :

(a) Why standest thou afar off, O Lord ?

Why hinest thou thyself in times of trouble ?

Psalm–19–(1)

Where dost thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadow ? *Gitanjali*–41

(b) What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit ? Shall the dust praise thee ? Shall it declare thy truth ? Psalm 30–(9)

And when my work shall be done in this world,

O King of kings, alone and speechless shall I stand before thee face to face ? *Gitanjali*–76

or

Now when the play-time is over, what is the sudden light that is come upon me ? *Gitanjali*–97

(c) Shall not God search this out ? for he knoweth the secret of the heart. Psalm 44–(21)

Is it beyond thee to be glad with the gladness of this rhythm ? *Gitanjali–7*

or

Has not the word come to you that the flower is reigning in splendour among stars ? *Gitanjali–55*

There are several other stylistic peculiarities common to *Gitanjali* and the Psalms. Some of them are listed below :

(a) Putting object or the complement in the beginning of a sentence and not after the finite verb :

Sacrifice and ofiering thou did'st not desire.
Psalm 40–(6)

Masters are many in your hall.... *Gitanjali–49*

(b) Beginning a sentence with an adjective :

Many, O Lord, my God, are thy wonderful works
Psalm 40–(5)

Rare is its lowliest seat, rare is its meanest of lives.
Gitanjali–92

or

Beautiful is thy wristlet, decked with stars and cunningly wrought in myriad coloured jewels. But more beautiful to me thy sword.
Gitanjali—53

(c) A finite verb in the start :

Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of inquiry.
Psalm 37–(1)

Ask not what I have with me to take there.
Gitanjali–94

Mark also the structural similarity between the following groups of quotations ;

(a) Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but Lord delivereth him out of them all. Psalm 34–(6)

Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes. *Gitanjali*–45

(b) When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all day long. *Psalm* 32–(3)

When thou commandest me to sing it seems that my heart would break with pride; and I look to thy face, and tears come to my eyes. *Gitanjali*–2

(c) Let me not be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon thee; let the wicked be as hamed, and let them be silent in the grave.

Psalm 31–(17)

...let me ever feel that I have missed thy sight–let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.

Gitanjali (79)

(d) O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead npon thee; let the wicked be ashamed,me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. –Psalm 43–(3)

Oh, dip my emptied life into that ocean, plunge it into the deepest fullness. Let me for once feel that lost sweet touch in the allness of the universe.

Gitanjali–87

(e) Yet, the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

Psalm 42–(8)

Even so, in death the same unknown will appear as ever known to me. And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well. *Gitanjali*–95

So on and so forth. Examples can be multiplied. And all these resemblances cannot just be incidental.

When W.B. Yeats included some of Tagore's poems in the Oxford Book of Modern Verse, a reviewer objected to it. "In a

poem by this Hindoo" he found "the raw material of poetry but seldom or never poetry itself". This learned fellow further added, "The solemn but self conscious rhythms, the diction that somehow contrives to be at once precious and common place, these do not avail in my judgment, to give poetic quality to the expression of familiar doctrine."[6]

This is clearly a case of applying wrong standards to a literary classic. It is devotional poetry—clear, moving, incantatory. The poetry of Psalms will not offend the taste of him who transports himself to the cliffs of Lebanon whence he may survey the glory of carmel and the relegalia of Sharon, and the white skiffs on the waters of Tiberias—where he may gaze on the majesty of the unclouded heavens and feast his vision with the fields, vineyards and pastures that smiled in luxuriance throughout "thy land O Immanual".

The same placid abandon is required to enjoy and appreciate Tagore's poetry. By far Tagore has been compared and contrasted with advantage or otherwise, with a host of poets from Sapho down to T.S. Eliot. In fact his peers are to be traced among the ancients who in the infancy of language called the grass 'green' and the sky 'blue' and made poetry out of that. It is not

> ...the evening spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherised on a table.[7]

Tagore's poetry is devoid of the mental twists, the sophistication, the intellectual atavism which characterise so much of what has been written and is being written in the name of modern poetry. Most modern poets muddy (on principle) the clear waters of poetry in order to look deep. The Hebrew singers of hymns did not do so. Nor did the Indian poets of the Bhakti cult. Nor does Tagore. This Indian poet "contemplates the Universe as a primitive poet might contemplate a pair of lovers, and make poetry of it, naturally and simply."[8]

See for example the haunting melody of Song No. 60 :

> On the sea shore of endless worlds children meet.

or the concluding stanza of *Gitanjali* :

> Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests let all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee.

It is not sulphur and brimstone. It is not instant coffee either. Nor is it olla podrida. It is incense burning inside a temple. Which of the aromas one relishes depends upon the brand of nose (and palate) one has.

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Alexander Senkevich

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND INDIA'S "NEW POETRY"

Contemporary readers regard the works of Rabindranath Tagore as an exceptional phenomenon of the human spirit. It seems a miracle that one man could live such a great creative life that knew no stagnation, no falseness or empty void, that everything that happened to him was meaningful and significant. A century has already passed since people began to get acquainted with that life. Still, there is a sense of incompleteness about it; that is, not a full grasp of the manifestations of true genius which, even after Tagore's physical death, continue to live and develop. We cannot speak of him as of a wise *rishi* or a mythological figure that exists outside time and space. It is impossible to regard Tagore in that manner because his creative life is immortal and at the same time has definite historical limits. Projected out of the past into the present, it is amazingly youthful. Most important of all, it is part of the artistic world that we are creating today. This life has turned into "jibon debota", the way the writer himself understood this aesthetic category; it has turned into a prototype of the flawless beauty of existence.

Therefore, Tagore's influence on the "new poetry" of India does not seem a far-fetched issue as far as I am concerned. Though Tagore died in 1941 and "new poetry" appeared only after India gained its independence, we have every reason to maintain that Tagore's works were of intransient significance for the contemporary Indian poets. Thanks to the knowledge we acquire when

we come into contact with the works of the great master the "new poetry" of India acquires a special light : it reveals features and qualities which testify to the "new poetry's" connection with the basic principles of Tagore's aesthetics.

Tagore is such a colossal figure in Indian literature that his absolute literary and cultural importance has not been sufficiently appreciated. Soviet Indologist Sergei Serebryany says that to understand Tagore would be tantamount to understanding modern India because the great poet and thinker has by right become one of the country's symbols.

Tagore introduced a spirit of high national awareness into Indian literature and through his works helped to produce new artistic trends and aesthetic norms. We should not forget that like the new poets, Tagore was a rebel. His ideological non-conformism meant his rejection of everything that debased the individual and which was not conducive to bringing out the best that the individual was capable of.

Tagore's poetry created the cult of the human being. It does not matter that we come across the religious and mythological images of Brahma, Shiva, Lakshmi and Urvashi and many others in his works—all of them become flesh and blood under the influence of the idea of the exclusiveness of the human individual. It stands to reason that Tagore's humanism has a special meaning for the "new poetry" of India.

Tagore's experience has helped the new poets understand the need to search for new poetics and new interpretation of ancient mythology. In this connection "Brahmarakshasa", the poem by Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh, the founder of the Hindi "new poetry", is of special interest; its main character and plot have their roots in India's cultural and historical heritage. This cultural background becomes a sort of screen on which we find projected a chain in new associations, actions and images which are undoubtedly the fruit of 20th century culture. According to Muktibodh this interaction of old and new cultures is called upon to create that tenseness and dynamism which will allow the old culture to exist in a new social and political context.

We come across the theme of "cross-roads" in the poetry of Muktibodh and the other "new poets" which we may take as an indication of cultural duality, and the splitting of the personality that lives on the crossroads between two worlds—the old Hindu

and the new bourgeois world—between two cultures. Tagore was the first Indian who attempted to eradicate this contradiction by building a bridge between Oriental and Western cultures. This bridge of mankind's spiritual unity is his chief legacy. Developing Tagore's idea, Muktiboh wrote : "There is one stream flowing from the East, and another flowing from the West, and a great river is formed where they converge."

India's "new poets" are known to have been horrified by the moral disintegration of the individual under capitalism, a disintegration that leads to the degradation and death of the human spirit.

They saw that men were squandering their spiritual powers on worthless things—on things that were unstable and temporary —in keeping with their understanding of bourgeois values. They realised that in the modern capitalist world man was losing his individuality under the impact of mass culture. Consumer psychology, which dictates man's behaviour in bourgeois society, has brought about his spiritual importance and indifference to everything that surrounds him, including himself. The essence of the "new poets" rebellion was their drive to preserve each man's individuality as a vital foundation for the development of harmony between the individual and society.

Let us remember Tagore's article "Change of Epochs" which was published in July 1933. The writer who had made the interests of the human being the core and the banner of his aspirations turns the article into an appeal to all men who cherish the humanitarian values of European culture. Tagore sees the dehumanisation of these values as the result of the process of man's all-round alienation which is taking place in capitalist society. His article condemns amorality as the basis of behaviour and as the basis of imperialist policy. These thoughts are repeated with still greater decisiveness in Tagore's address entitled "To the Conscience of Humanity".

A harmonious development of the individual is the cherished and inaccessible (under the circumstances) goal which Tagore and the "new poets" aspire. The models of behaviour worked out by both the traditional and bourgeois societies either debase the individual or elevate him unduly orienting him towards survival at all costs, even at the cost of moral values, in an antagonistic society. In India's "new poetry" the condemnation of amoralism as the basis of behaviour is at the same time a challenge to those

who regard success in the business world as the only worthwhile goal in life and who have made their community into a mafia.

India's "new poets", especially those with democratic leanings, comprehended reality as fragmented, as torn asunder by social injustice, and yet, like Tagore, they created an integral image of the artist true to his convictions, noble in his compassionate attitude towards other men and constant in his moral principles.

In his collected works *People Have Forgotten,* a leading figure in the "new poetry" in Hindi, Raghuvir Sahay, calls on the people to return to simple human feelings and intransient moral values and at the same time to be aware of the truth about themselves and the world around them. The poet is appalled that the people's idea of happiness lies in the constant acquisition of material possessions and that the scale of values is shifting all the time. Sahay insists that good and evil are social factors and hence the struggle for the future of the human being, for the consolidation of moral principles, concerns not only the writer, the philosopher or the politician, this struggle directly touches the lives of millions of Indians. Is not this outlook of "new poetry" close to what Tagore propounded ; that is, his life-long hatred of social injustice, violence, thirst for power and lack of spirituality ?

Hence, it would be incorrect to think that in its rebellion the "new poetry" has completely rejected the traditions of national culture. The commitment of the "new poets" to their culture is obvious. It is another matter that they had an affinity for Tagore's idea that "providence seems to have opened a huge laboratory in the land of India in order to obtain an unprecedented social alloy" and that "the goal of India's history is to attain a high human ideal and such perfection as would become an acquisation for all men". This idea of Tagore's is further developed in the reflections of Muktibodh who said that "national feeling cannot be separated from the international, and the 'new poetry' can become international only if it has its roots in national soil."

The positive ideal of the majority of the "new poets" is vague as a rule, but none of them doubts the need to formulate this ideal, and their striving towards that ideal inspires their poetry.

Speaking of the increasing personal element in India's "new poetry", that is, when the individual is taken as a unit of existence, we cannot help noting how fruitful Tagore thought

such a road of poetic development was and how vividly it was manifested in his own works.

Tagore depicted such an individual as being open to the surrounding world. That brought about a broadening awareness and greater knowledge of the world. Many Soviet Tagore scholars such as Viktor Ivbulis and Sergei Serebryany point out that Tagore's evolution (or at least a component part of his evolution) is marked by transition from the egocentric lyrical poet, immersed in his inner world, to a world poet. It was precisely this road that the democratically inclined "new poets" chose as the only reliable one.

The problem of the individual and his relations with society is the central problem in the "new poetry". Moreover, the "new poets" point to the discrepancy between the hopes of the individual brought up in the spirit of the national-liberation movement, and the real development of society, the discrepancy between what is and what should be. Hence, the motifs of disillusionment, solitude and even hopelessness which are to be found in the "new poetry". Much of Tagore's poetry is also noted for its disillusionment but the writer overcomes his pessimism through the perception of history and his identification with it. This history oversteps the boundaries of the past and is projected into the future. It is precisely this presence of the past in today's reality that is at the bottom of this sense of being at a crossroad. That sentiment is characteristic of India's democratically inclined new poets and the combination in their poetry of the reflection of the pas tand a feeling of involvement in it.

Thought is the organising power in Tagore's works, but it is thought born of feeling and merging with it. Thought is what defines the image of India's "new poetry". One of Tagore's dominant concepts, the idea of service to the people, is also of primary importance to the "new poets" who are guided by it as they write in the numerous languages of India.

Asha Viswas

GITANJALI AND *GITAGOVINDA* : A STUDY IN INFLUENCE

There is evidence that Rabindranath had read some of the medieval Vaishnav poets and was much influenced by them :

> ...I was a keen student of the series of old Vaishnava poems which were being collected and published by Babus Akshay Sarkar and Saroda Mitter. Their language, largely mixed with Maithili, I found difficult to understand ; but for that very reason I took all the more pains to get at their meaning. My feeling towards them was that same eager curiosity with which I regarded the ungerminated sprout within the seed, or the undiscovered mystery under the dust-covering of the earth. My enthusiasm was kept up with the hope of bringing to light some unknown poetical gems, as I went deeper and deeper into the unexplored darkness of this treasure house.[1]

In his early days the poet was captivated by the supersensuousness of these Vaishnava poets and had unhesitatingly accepted them as model. His "Bhanusingher Padavali", written in his teens, is a result of his reading of Vaishnava poetry. In these songs he has closely imitated their language and imagery. The theme of the poems is unrequited love of Radha for Krishna. Krishna plays on his flute in the background of blooming flowers, leafy green of the forest, clouds and rains and the shade of evening. Rabindranath had shown "Bhanusingher Padavali" to a friend telling him that the poems were composed "by an old Vaishnava poet named Bhanusingha. He (the friend) was profoundly stirred"[2].

In his later years the poet discerned the defects of these Vaishnava poets but they had cast a spell on him. He was particularly influenced by Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Chandidas. Jayadeva's perfection of form, metrical excellence, lyrical movement and images seem to have become a part of his inner consciousness so much so that every deliberate effort on his part, specially in the *Gitanjali* period (1901–1912), to shake off their influence, seems to be in vain. *Gitagovinda* appears to have influenced the following features of *Gitanjali*.

1. THEME : The conventional pattern of union–separation –reunion is the theme of Rabindranath's *Gitanjali*. It begins with memories of the previous union and ends with the expected union and between union and hope and faith of reunion is separation filled with remembrance and anticipation. This pattern found in Indian erotic literature is the archetypal structure of Hindu ontology : In the beginning was the All, the One, Brahman, Atman, Purusa ; Creation meant separation, duality, multiplicity ; and then at the end of each cosmic era, there is reunion, reabsorption into the One and then it starts again and again. In Vedanta the separation is 'maya', the world illusion and the highest goal and reality is to be merged into the cosmic self. In the *Samkhya* system the separation is of the 'jiva' from the 'Purusa'. The 'jiva' is entangled in 'Prakriti'. Here too the highest goal is reunion. In Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* Radha and Krishna are one. They get separated in order to taste the ravishing sweetness of reunion. The relationship of Radha and Krishna in *Gitagovinda* is the relationship between 'jiva' and the 'Purusa' and the movement of union–separation–reunion is the process of entry into 'Samsara' and liberation from it through attachment. Jayadeva's Radha recalls the previous love makings :

> He, who allays the fear of sin
> Of the aeon of Kali,
> made love to me
> beneath the blooming kadamba tree
> pleasing me in earnest
> with quivering looks
> as of bodiless love embodied,[3] (2, 8.)

The devotee–lover of *Gitanjali* also recalls his previous union with the divine in the very first song :

> At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy...[4] (I)

His body has not yet forgotten the touch of the lover—"my whole body and my limbs have thrilled with his touch (XCVI). In those days he "knew nor shyness nor fear" and his "life was boisterous" (XCVII). The devotee's lack of shyness and fear, his boisterousness and carefree life run parallel to Radha's gloating over her secret and hence adventurous meeting with Krishna in *Gitagovinda* which ends with Radha feeling the 'serene delight' of passionate love making and getting decorated by the Lord. *Gitanjali* ends with the devotee-lover's firm faith in the coming union :

> I surely know the hundred petals of a lotus will not remain closed for ever and the secret recess of its honey will be bared. (XCVIII)

The dropping of honey can be interpreted on both the sacred and profane levels. The devotee is "eager to die into the deathless". This 'dying' is the same erotic ecstasy as Radha feels when united with Krishna. Thus there are obvious thematic similarities between *Gitagovinda* and *Gitanjali.*

2. PHILOSOPHY : In the Vaishnavism of Sahajiyas (Jayadeva belongs to this cult) the vision begins with the monism of Upanishads : All is one; but this One, Brahman, divided itself into two —Krishna, the Bhagvat and Radha, his Shakti. Radha-Krishna are one and the same eternally but for divine sport, they have separated themselves into two bodies. Krishnaite metaphysic is a description of reality based upon the idea of Krishna's powers. These infinite powers are of three basic types :

A—The JIVA-SHAKTI : This is the power by which the individual soul (*jiva*) relates to the Lord. The Bhagvat is the fire and jivas are like infinite sparks. The relationship between the jiva and the Bhagvat is 'bhedabheda'. They are the same and yet different. This dualistic monism is inscrutable (*achintya*), a mystery. Rabindranath expresses this relationship of jiva and Bhagvat when he sings :

Thou settest a barrier in thine own being and then callest thy severed self in myriad notes. This thy self-separation has taken body in me.

... ...

The great pageant of thee and me has overspread the sky. With the tune of thee and me all the air is vibrant, and all ages pass with the hiding and seeking of thee and me. (LXXI)

B—The MAYA-SHAKTI : The power of illusion is the source of the creation of the empirical world. The Bhagvat controls it and the jivas are subject to it until they free themselves from the influence of maya through devotion. In *Gitagovinda* Jayadeva invokes this maya-shakti of the Bhagvat :

You free us from bonds of existence
Cause of three worlds
Glory be to Thee. O Hari ! (1, 21.)

In *Gitanjali* Rabindranath too surrenders himself to this Lord of maya-shakti :

He it is who weaves the web of this *maya* in evanescent hues of gold and silver, blue and green, and lets peep out through the folds his feet, at whose touch I forget myself. (LXXII)

C—The CHIT OR SWARUPA-SHAKTI—Of this power the highest phase is called the haladini shakti, the power of joy, the Bhagvat's infinite power for giving and enjoying sweetness. Krishna himself is delight and tastes delight. Radha is the haladini shakti of Krishna, the means by which he tastes and gives joy. Jayadeva's Krishna "delighted everybody" (1, 19.), "bestowing bliss everywhere" (1, 48.). Rabindranath's God too is Bliss consciousness :

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad. (LVII)

Gitagovinda's Krishna delights Radha with his love-play and is delighted by her. The God in *Gitanjali* does the same :

> The world is weaving words in my mind and thy joy is adding music to them. Thou givest thyself to me in love and then feelest thine own entire sweetness in me.
>
> (LXV)

In the Vaishnav philosophy liberation comes from attachment. Attachment is the means rather than an obstacle in the path of liberation. The supreme Bhagvat took on the form of the lover so that the devotee could gain to access to the sacred, the infinite and eternal. Liberation comes through loving, desiring Krishna with no interest in liberation. Liberation is not the goal of love but its byproduct. The answer to the paradox of liberation from the world through attachment to the world is the "secret-love" of sahajiyas. Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* is a revelation of this doctrine of 'secret love'. Actual union is avoided because if the devotee is liberated there will be no Bhakti, no love and love is higher than liberation. It is in dualism that love can be active. Rabindranath too negates that liberation which will separate the devotee from the Divine. Even the Bhagvat is attached :

> Deliverance ? Where is this deliverance to be found ? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever. (XI)

The same negation of liberation is expressed in *Gitagovinda* :

> Krishna, the enemy of the Kamsa
> placed Radha in his heart ;
> submitted willingly to be chained
> by the longings of worldly attachment. (3, 1.)

The religious systems aim at release ; but human love is bondage and attachment. Krishna is the Lord of the universe, yet he enters time and space out of love for Radha binding himself to 'Samsara'. LEELA or PLAY was considered the 'creative' and 'recreative' activity of the Lord by the Vaishnava poets. Worship is a blissful enjoyment of the divine sport. There is no other purpose of God's play but the play itself. The act of generation, operation, destruction and then regeneration is God's play and the world is His playground. The devotees are to sing and meditate on this 'leela'. Women (*Gopies*) are most suited to join this play but even men

join it. During the day time the men are 'friends' of the Bhagvat but during the night they become His 'beloveds'. Since the Bhagvat himself is neither male nor female, and is transcendent, there is no sin in men's joining this dance. The play is in the consciousness of the meditator. The emotion and sentiment of this play is a mental experience, not just the physical one as it is the mind that settles down in meditation. In the *Gitagovinda* Krishna's

> ...delightful limbs, dark and tender
> are clusters of blue lotuses
> The gopies surround him
> embracing him with joy
> and caress him passionately.
> Hari, in this spring, sports
> like love incarnate
> bestowing bliss on everyone. (1, 48.)

In *Gitanjali* Rabindranath expresses the same idea of the world as God's playground :

> In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play... (XCVI)

God has made his "heart captive in the endless meshes" of His music and his "heart longs to join" in this song (III). In yet another song he sings :

> Thus it is that thy joy in me is so full...Thou hast taken me as thy partner of all this wealth. In my heart is the endless play of thy delight. (LVI)

Thus we can say with conviction that the philosophy (*Darshan*) of *Gitanjali* has been influenced by *Gitagovinda* or that both the poets have drawn it from the same source.

3. CHARACTERS : Though nowhere in *Gitanjali* Rabindranath names his God as Krishna, yet from the very first song onwards he refers to the flute playing of God. In the first song God has breathed "eternally new" melodies through his "flute of reed". In the third song God "illumines the world" with His music and has captivated the devotee's heart "in the endless meshes" of His music. In the seventh song the devotee wishes to make his life

"like a flute of reed for thee to fill with music". In the twenty-first song the devotee hears "the notes of the the far-away song floating from the other shore". In song twenty six his God visited him "when the night was still; He had His harp in His hands" and the devotee's "dreams became resonant with its melodies". In the next song when the devotee-beloved goes to the "love tryst through the darkness of night", his "heart gropes for the path to where the music of the night calls" him. In the seventy-fourth song "the unknown man plays upon his lute". In song seventy nine again the "flutes sound". All these images are associated with Lord Krishna. In Vaishnava poetry this mythology of Vishnu incarnated as the irresistible and playful cowherd-lover was a sacralization of human love. The Krishna of *Gitagovinda*, unlike the Puranic Krishna, suffers in his separation from Radha and by this suffering is humanized. He is subject to the pain of love which in the Bhagvat Purana and other prior literature he had inflicted but had not himself felt. Krishna's subordination to Radha reflects the influence of Hindu Tantrism's 'shakti' cult. Rabindranath closely follows Jayadeva in his conception of the divine. His God is transcendent and yet immanent, wholly distinct from the self, and dearly personal, to be desired with all one's heart. He is not the Absolute, impersonal, qualitiless Brahman of the Upanishads but the humanized Krishna of *Gitagovinda* who loves and is loved. In *Gitagovinda* it is not Radha alone who desires Krishna's love. Krishna too suffers the pangs of separation and waits for Radha's love :

> He sighs in vain
> Looks around again and again.
> He enters the forest
> humming to himself in despair
> He prepares your bed again
> and looks out in the wood expecting you.
> O Radha, your lover,
> pressed by the pains of passion
> Is moaning for you. (5, 16.)

The humanized God of *Gitanjali* too waits for the individual soul :

> If I call not thee in my prayers, if I keep not thee in my

heart, thy love for me still waits for my love. (XXXII)

The individual 'I' is aware of its importance in relation to the cosmic 'I' :

> ...thou hast come down to me, O thou Lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not ? (LVI)

Thus the close similarity between Krishna of *Gitagovinda* and God of *Gitanjali* suggests influence. As for the Radha of *Gitagovinda*, we have her counterpart in the devotee-lover *Gitanjali*. He loves the Lord passionately with the love of a woman and throughout the songs this passionate love runs parallel to that of Radha of *Gitagovinda* who moves to meet her lover in secrecy and darkness. *Gitanjali's* devotee-lover goes "to the love-tryst through the darkness of night" when "the sky is overcast with clouds and the rain is ceaseless". His "heart gropes for the path to where the music of the night calls" him[5]. (XXVIII)

Bhakti must be passionate and the 'Parkiya Parodha' relationship creates a greater passion than the 'Swakiya' one. If there is no 'Parkiya' there can be no sentiment (*Bhava*). It is in fear of separation that grief and passionate longing grow. 'Anurag' manifests itself in extra-marital love. The illicit relationship between lovers could be considered prototypical of the relationship between the devotee and the Bhagvat—the devotee might find that his relationship with the Lord conflicted with social rules, with family and friends. The feeling of peril, passion, fear, the intensity of love must remain in Bhakti; the devotee must adore the Lord not out of duty, but because he is overwhelmed and enraptured.

Thus the devotee-lover of *Gitanjali* offers his love to the Supreme Being in the same ways as does the 'Parkiya' Radha of *Gitagovinda*. But here there is one difference between the two poets. Most of the Vaishnava poets, specially Jayadeva, Chandidas and Vidyapati were content to be the Sakhis or the messengers. They never longed for their own union with Krishna. Nowhere in *Gitagovinda* do we find the desire of the poet to have union with Krishna as Radha had. He only sings praises of the 'lila' of Radha and Krishna. He just wishes to have a peep into the divine Lila and for him this is the highest spiritual bliss. Here Rabindranath differs from Jayadeva and follows Chaitanya

who placed himself in the position of Radha and longed with all the tormenting pain and passion of heart for union with the Lord. Perhaps this difference of attitude was caused by the impact of the milieu. Probably the 12th century literary conventions and traditions did not give poets freedom for such identification which Chaitanya could get in the 16th and Rabindranath in the 20th century. Or it may be the impact of later mysticism which was unknown in the 12th century.

4. EMOTION (*Bhava*) : Sublimation, curbing the senses, overcoming carnal desires, is a fundamental ideal throughout Hinduism. In Samkhya or Vedanta love as a uniting force between two things cannot exist because there is no two-ness, only unity. In the *Gita* non-attachment, renunciation and passionlessness are the ideals. Even Vatsyayan says that he composed the Kamsutra only after observing strict celibacy[6]. He is concerned with 'Kama' in the context of other aims of life—'dharma' and 'artha'. Love in its sensual and passionate form was expressed in classical Sanskrit court poetry but the goal here was not liberation from the world but rather a revelation of the joys and beauties of this world so much so that the profane seemed to make fun of the sacred.

The Krishna motif had been established by the third century A. D. and in the history of Krishnaism sensual, human longing became clearly related to sacred love. Within the Krishna cults a love mysticism, a love symbolism developed. The human and divine became interwoven in love, in Bhakti. This Bhakti was no longer simply 'devotion' but Bhakti as fervent, passionate love. Such a Bhakti, as described in the Bhagvat Purana is not worship out of a sense of duty or mere meditation on God, or mere singing and chanting of his name, but a deep affection (*Anurakti*). It is therefore neither knowledge (*Gyan*) nor any kind of activity (*Karma*) but is a feeling and this feeling aims at liberation. Jayadeva makes departure even from this concept of Puranic love which aims at liberation. He celebrates love for the sake of love and not love as a means for liberation ar awakening. His is the human love as an ultimate reality in itself. This love is celebrated in each molecule of the body, heart and soul. Rabindranath has followed this view of love in *Gitanjali*.

The emotion (*Bhava*) of love permeates *Gitagovinda* and *Gitanjali*. It is presented in its dynamics of union and separation.

Rabindranath seems to be closely following Jayadeva when he expresses the devotee-beloved's union with the divine-lover :

> What was the power that made me open out into this vast mystery like a bud in the forest at midnight ! When in the morning I looked upon the light I felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this world, that the inscrutable without name and form had taken me in its arms. (XCV)

In the morning light when the beloved looks at herself she realizes that she had completely surrendered herself to the lover in the forest. It is a complete one-ness without the otherness of clothing. Clothes would mar the love play :

> She has no pride of dress and decoration. Ornaments would mar our union; they would come between thee and me; their jingling would drown thy whispers. (VII)

This is reminiscent of *Gitagovinda* where the sakhi advises Radha for the removal of ornaments and clothes :

> ...But first remove
> those noisy anklets
> that disturb with their jingle
> the sport of love (5, 11.)

and

> Loosen your garments, untie your girdle
> open your loins
> For him who gets the delight
> of viewing the gem unveiled. (5, 13.)

The jiva can meet the Brahman only when all masks are removed all ego is gone.

The highest form of devotion comes not in union but after union in the fear of separation. The more intense the fear, the greater the love, and the greater the love, the greater the fear. This love-in-separation motif finds its full expression in *Gitanjali*. At least four of the seven stages of 'Virhani Naika' are presented. A—The devotee is 'Prosita-Priya' whose lover is in a distant

land and the 'journey' to him "is long and the way of it long" (XII).

B—The devotee is also the 'vasak sajja' who awaits her lover's arrival, ready to greet him. Expectation fills the heart with desire :

> From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and I know that of a sudden the happy moment will arrive when I shall see.
>
> In the meanwhile the air is filling with the perfume of promise.[7] (XLIV)

C—At times the devotee is the 'vipralabdha' whose lover does not come to the tryst as agreed :

> Early in the day it was whispered that we should sail in a boat, and thou and I, and never a soul in the world would know of this...Is the time not come yet ? Are there works still to do ? (XLII)

Gitagovinda's Radha too complains :

> Alas ! Hari did not come to the woods
> at the promised time of our meeting. (7, 3.)

D—Finally the devotee-lover is also presented as 'Abhisarika' who goes to meet her lover in the secrecy of night when :

> The sky is overcast with clouds and the rain is ceaseless...my heart gropes for the path to where the music of the night calls me...It thunders and the wind rushes screaming through the void. The night is black as a black stone.[8] (XXVII)

Apart from these stages of Virahini Naika, all the symptoms of love in separation present in *Gitagovinda* can be found in *Gitanjali*. These are as follows :

A—LONGING (*Abhilasha*) : In *Gitanjali* the pain of separation is cruel and unbearable but the devotee-beloved lives in the hope of meeting :

> ...only there is the agony of wishing in my heart....I live in the hope of meeting with him; but this meeting is not yet. (XIII)

The fragrance of summer flowers kindless desire and the heart aches "with longing" (XX).
The devotee waits for the divine lover without caring for the public blame :

> I am only waiting for love to give myself up at last into his hands ...People blame me and call me heedless.
>
> (XVII)

Jayadeva's Radha too abandons modesty :

> Seeing you delayed
> She waits prepared
> modesty abandons her
> She laments and sobs
> as she waits to love you. (6, 8.)

B—FEAR : The dark clouds of the rainy season fill the devotee's heart with fear :

> Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let me wait outside at the door all alone ? ...On this dark lonely day it is only for thee that I hope. If thou showest me not thy face, if thou leavest me wholly aside, I know not how I am to pass these long, rainy hours. (XVIII)

C—SEEING EVERYTHING AS THE BELOVED (*Tanmayata*) :
In *Gitagovinda* Radha dresses like Krishna and fancies herself to be Krishna :

> She dresses to look like you
> Looks at herself, again and again
> and fancies herself to be Krishna, Madhu's foe[9]. (6, 5.)

In *Gitanjali* too we are presented with this height of love where individuality loses itself. The devotee sometimes calls the divine his 'bride', his 'beloved' and sometimes as male 'lover'.
D—REMEMBRANCE (*Smarana*) : Absence gives pain but remembrance brings pleasure to the devotee. It is God alone who is the concern of the individual, all else is naught ;

> That I want thee, only thee—let my heart repeat without end...even thus in the depth of my consciousness rings the cry—'I want thee, only thee' (XXXVIII)

Jayadeva's Radha too meditates on Krishna, "she gets consolation only from from the thought of" Krishna's union (4, 8.).

E—REFUGE (*Sharan*) : Taking refuge in the Lord is a symptom of love and expression of Bhakti. The impulse to seek the refuge comes out of the devotee's despair at separation from the Lord. Jayadeva links this despair with the pain of love-in-separation. Separation is valued because it makes the devotee-lover realize the need for refuge in, union with Krishna. Jayadeva begins and ends his *Gitagovinda* taking refuge at the feet of his Lord. So does Rabindranath. He begins *Gitanjali* touching the feet of God through his song and ends it :

> In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread out and touch this world at thy feet. (CIII)

The devotee is content when he leaves all his "burdens on his hands who can bear all" (IX). He is always aware that complete surrender to the master will solve all his problems :

> On many an idle day have I grieved over lost time. But it is never lost, my lord. Thou hast taken every moment of my life in thine own hands. (LXXXI)

Thus love is the basic emotion of *Gitanjali* and in the expression of love Rabindranath closely follows Jayadeva, the Adiguru of the doctrine of secret-love.

5. SYMBOLS Some of the symbols used in *Gitagovinda* find their expression in *Gitanjali.* These are as follows :

A—NIGHT : As a matter of fact, it is the context that limits or extends the significance of a symbol. But in a poem all the values and meanings of a word come into play. In the Indian religious traditions darkness is 'Tamas' which binds and blinds. It is also gloom, ignorance, fear, sin, and degeneration. In the Indian literary traditions darkness is erotic. The night enhances the erotic mood (*Shringar Rasa*). Jayadeva and Rabindranath use darkness as opposed to light to symbolize dualities—flesh and spirit, male

and female, jiva and Atman. In *Gitagovinda* Radha sends a secret message to Krishna :

> O brother, why stay behind
> under this banyan tree
> haunted by Krishna Bhogin.
>
> (7, 12.)

This 'Krishna Bhogin' is either Krishna the lover or the black cobra. This play on words is the essence of *Gitagovinda*. Sexual longing is deadly because it binds one to this world but this deadly thing is also liberation in joy by grace of Krishna, the dark one. As the darkness of night is made joyous by the beloved in the tryst, the darkness of ignorance is lighted by Krishna in devotion. Rabindranath seems to be obsessed with this symbol of darkness as opposed to light :

> A moment's flash of lighting drags down a deeper gloom on my sight, and my heart gropes for the path to where the music of the night calls me. Light, oh where is the light !...The night is black as a black stone. Let not the hours pass by in the dark. Kindle the lamp of love with thy life.
>
> (XXVII)

Here night has been enhancing the erotic mood but it is also the night of ignorance. Sometimes the night is his unconscious, from where comes the cry—"I want thee, only thee" (XXXVIII). In songs XV, XVIII, XIX, XXIII, XXVI, XXVII, XXXIII, LI, LXXVI the darkness symbol has literary as well as religious significance.

B—The LOTUS : In tantrism the bodily centres (chakras) are imagined and described as lotuses. In other hindu religious traditions it is a symbol of the sacred particularly associated with vishnu who holds it in one of his hands, a lotus grows from his naval bearing Brahma, giving birth to the universe. Jayadeva uses the lotus symbol through a blending of metaphors.

1—The sexual metaphor : lotus as beauty and balm to sooth the body tormented by passion (4, 21.)

2—The psychological metaphor : consciousness as the lotus (6, 4.).

3—Cosmological metaphor—The universe as lotus (9, 6.).

Rabindranath too blends these metaphors, when he writes :

> I surely know the hundred petals of a lotus will not remain closed for ever and the secret recess of its honey will be bared. (XCVIII)

He is referring to 'Brahm-Randhra' or 'aperture of Brahma'. It is the fontanel opening at the top of the head. When consciousness is focussed in the head centre, mystic 'soma' drops from it and leads the meditator to ecstasy, transcendence, and cosmic consciousness. But this song can also be interpreted, specially if one takes into account the erotic images, on sexual level. Bursting of life bonds "in exceeding pain", "hollow reed", "melting of stone", "secret recess of honey", "death at thy feet" all have sexual connotations. In Tantrism the female sexual organ is described as 'lotus' and "honey grotto". In song XCVI when Rabindranath sings "I have tested of the hidden honey of this lotus that expands on the ocean of light" he again uses lotus as psychological metaphor (in the *tantric* vocabulary) and as cosmological metaphor meaning the worldly life of this universe which he has enjoyed through his senses. In Song LVIII "red lotus of pain" uses the cosmological metaphor.

C. SPRING : Spring, when life comes forth from the death of winter, may be maya, but to Jayadeva and Rabindranath it is a symbol of beauty, brilliance and delight. This is because these two poets are not concerned so much with liberation from this maya through renunciation, but aim at a mystical participation in the world. What strikes the reader of *Gitanjali* is that the rainy nights of July (Songs XVIII, XXIII, XXVII, XLV) are nights of longing, frustration and 'abhisar' in which union is always postponed. The devotee-beloved has meetings with the divine lover in the "repose of the sun-embroidered green-gloom" of the spring season (XLVIII). Another meeting takes places when the cuckoo sings from the unseen dark and perfume of babla flowers comes from the bend of the road (LIV). Thus symbolic similarities again show influence.

6. SAHAJ BHAKTI : Finally, Jayadeva, the Vaishnava sahajiya, seems to have great appeal for Rabindranath. Sahaj means easy, natural, spontaneous. Spontaneity, naturalness was the means and the end of the sahajiya celebration of love. In the ascetic tradition 'natural', 'sensual' or 'sensuous' was to be overcome. But

for the sahajiyas the senses could lead the devotee to the great delight, Rabindranath does not negate delight through the senses :

> Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.
> (LXXIII)

He emphatically says :

> No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight. (LXXIII)

The sahajiyas did not make a strict distinction between human and divine and considered all men as embodiments of Krishna. It is this unity consciousness which Rabindranath expresses when he sings :

> Thou has made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou has given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger. (LXIII)

For the sahajiyas, spontaneous human love leads the devotee to the great delight. *Gitanjali* expresses this *sahaj* love between the devotee and the divine :

> At last, when I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes, I saw thee standing by me, flooding my sleep with thy smile. How I had feared that the path was long and wearisome, and the struggle to reach thee was hard!
> (XLVIII)

Influence can also be traced on the form of the poem. Its music, figurative language, alliterations, assonances and use of nasals certainly show influence but this aspect of the two poems is not the subject of this paper.

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1. Tagore, R., *Reminiscences*, Macmillan, London, 1961, pp. 136-37.
2. *Ibid.* p. 138.

3. Mukhopadhyay, D., *Translation of Gitagovinda in Sanskrit of Jayadeva*, Minimax Publications, Delhi, 1980.
4. Tagore, R., *Gitanjali*, Macmillan India Ltd., Madras 1974.
5. We have a parallel in Vidyapati's Radha who gets a secret message from Sakhi and comes to the trysting place in torrential rains and darkness of the month of July.
6. Vatsyayan, *Kamsutra*, VII, II, 57.
6. In Vidyapati Padavali's Canto 19, in Songs IV & V the hope of meeting Krishna fills Radha's heart with joy. She sings, smiles and thinks of a number of tricks for love play.
8. The description of Abhisar is reminiscent of Vidyapati Padavali's Canto 12, Song 14 where Radha goes to meet Krishna when the sky is overcast with clouds, the earth is flooded. There is lightning in the sky and it is raining torrentially. In the pitch black night it is difficult to find the path and reach the trysting place.
9. Vidyapati's Radha is so much in love with Krishna that she thinks of herself as Krishna and desperately calls Radha's name again and again. (Canto 18.)

Saleem Ahmed

HAFIZ AND TAGORE : A STUDY IN INFLUENCE

Shakkar shikan shavand hamesh tutyian-in-Hind Zin kand-i-Parsi ki be-Bangaleh mi-ravad.

—Hafiz

How happy in their sugar pecking these Indian parrots all,
Who banquet on this Persian candy transmitted to Bengal.

—Herman Bicknell

According to Jawahar Lal Nehru, "Few people have been more closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of India and the people of Iran."[1] From ancient times, the two countries have been a constant source of inspiration to each other in philosophy, art and literature. As regards Indian mystic thought, none can deny that it has had its own native founts of inspiration. But it cannot be gainsaid that the Persian sufism has given it fresh insights and new dimensions. "Among many peoples and races who have come in contact with and influenced India's life and culture," states Nehru, "the oldest and most persistent have been the Iranians."[2] Especially, literature and art of medieval Iran have proved to be almost a perennial source of inspiration for Indian lovers of the Muses. It was in India that the renaissance of Persian letters took place during the times of the Moghuls.

Iran has produced a number of great sufis, philosophers and men of letters who are known the world over. Particularly the literary wonders of Iran, such as the Firdowsi, Rumi, Khayyam,

Sa'di, Jami, Attar and the like who have earned almost universal recognition for their unique and powerful contribution to world literature. Their "impassioned poetry and deep philosophy"[3] has been functional in guiding literary thought and sensibility in India too. Hafiz (1325-1390) is one of these literary greats of Iran whose subtle response to beauty, sufi adventures and almost all-embracing vision of life, among other things, are still valuable to the literati in our country. It is therefore pertinent to give a brief account of the life of this great poet of Iran at this moment.

Khwajeh Shamsud-Din Mohammed Hafiz, the greatest lyric poet of Iran, was born in Shiraz in 1325 A.D. He belonged to a respectable family. His father, Shaikh Bahaud-Din migrated to Shiraz from Isfahan and died when Hafiz was a child. It was therefore left for his mother to look after his education. He was instructed by many a learned teacher in Shiraz, specially by Kiwamud-Din' Abdullah (d. 1370) who was the most erudite teacher of his time. Hafiz was a precocious genius, naturally inclined to poetic expressions for which he was much appreciated by his teachers. Mir Syed Sharif 'Allameh-i-Gurgani, who otherwise discouraged his disciples from writing poetry, used to encourage Hafiz in his poetic attempts. The disciples who protested against his discrimination were told that he did so because Hafiz's poetry was intuitive and full of wisdom. Quite early in his life, Hafiz became acquainted with such eminent poets of his country as Rudgi, Firdowsi, Mu'izzi, Fakhruddin Gurgani, Zahir, Khayyam, Anwari, Khakani, Sanai, 'Attar, Rumi, Sa'di and others of great fame in the Persian world of literature. He learned, among other things, Arabic language and literature, history, mysticism and music. However, he felt disconcerted by the stagnant views of the local teachers and their tendency to thwart the spirit of enquiry in their pupils. He has made a reference to this in his *Diwan* or Collection of verses.[4] He was called Hafiz because he had learnt the Kuran by heart and this he adopted for his *nom de plume*.

He was highly sensitive to physical beauty and inclined to believe in the principle of pleasure. A man of liberal mind, he was unimpeded by moral or religious fanaticism. Rather, he came down heavily upon the prevalent moral and religious hypocrisy.

He came on the Persian literary scene during the reign of

Abu Ishak Ishak Inju, contemporary of Mohammad Tughlak in India. Abu Ishak was well in with Hafiz and held him in great reverence. During his rule, Shiraz remained immune to the excesses of the corrupt officials, pseudo-sufis and religious hypocrites. But this peaceful period soon came to an end with the ascension of Prince Mubarizud-Din whose austere nature could not suffer freedom of thought and action. Wine was strictly prohibited along with other secular modes of pleasure. Hafiz is said to have braced all sorts of adversity during the reign of this monarch. However, he solaced himself and his fellow beings by his optimistic verses. After Mubarizud–Din, his son Shah Shuja ascended the throne of Shiraz. But after a short while, he too followed in his father's footsteps. Among other things, he was highly conceited of his poetic genius and worth. Naturally, he could not bear with the rising fame and influence of the poet of Shiraz. Eventually, he decided to kill Hafiz. In order to execute his plan smoothly he gained sympathy of the moral hypocrites and pseudo-sufis who wanted to retaliate upon the poet for his exposing their double-standards of life. He was blamed for perpetrating disbelief and blasphemy through his verses. Hafiz could save himself with great difficulty. Fearing the hostile attitude of the state and the church, the members of his family burnt most of his writings. That is probably the reason why his name does not appear in the works of his contemporary authors. Even his intimate friends amongst them did not dare acknowledge his worth. Therefore, his verses could not be collected and published in his life-time.

He witnessed the depredations of Timur or Tamerlane and much iniquity add bloodshed towards the end of his life. He died in 1390 and was buried in Shiraz after a heated controversy over his interment.

After a considerably long time, one of his admirers named Mohammad Gulandam collected his verses and arranged them systematically into a *Diwan*. It is however remarkable that in spite of being agonized intermitantly by the regal as well as clerical antagonism, Hafiz could have almost perfect control on his imagination and, with matchless patience and equanimity of mind, write such lyrics as assured him the highest rank amongst the lyric poets of Iran.

Shiraz might not have recognized his genius but other peoples did. In India, for example, he was held in high esteem by the

royal connoisseurs of literature. Mahmud Shah Bahmani of the Deccan invited him to India during the period of his rule over the Deccan from 1378 to 1396. Hafiz eid accept this invitation. He came down as far as the port of Hurmuz but the fear of maritime hazards kept him from proceeding further. However. he sent the following verses to the Shah from Shiraz :

Dami be gham basar burdan jehan yaksar nami arzad
Be-mey befrush dalki ma kazin behtar nami arzad.
Shikuhi taji sultani ki bimi jan daru darjast
Kulahi dilkesh ast amma be-jami dar nami arzad.
Be-kuyi mey ferushan-ash be-tarki sar nami arzad.
Zahi sajjadeh-i-takva ki yek saghar nami grzad.
Bas asan mi namud avval ghami darya be-buyi sud
Ghalat kardam ki yek mowj-ash bassad gowher nami arzad.

Not all the sum of earthly happiness / Is worth the bowed head of a moment's pain, / And if I sell for wine my dervish dress / Worth more than what I sell is what I gain !

The Sultan's crown, with priceless jewells set, /Encircles fear of death and constant dread;/ It is a head-dress much desired—and yet /Art sure 'tis worth the danger to the head ?

Down in the quarter where they sell red wine /My holy carpet scarce would fetch a cup--/How brave a pledge of piety is mine,/Which is not worth a goblet foaming up !/ Full easy seemed the sorrow of the sea/Lightened by hope of gain--hope flew too fast !/A hundred pearls were poor indemnity, /Not worth the blast.[5]

Another Indian ruler who extended invitation to him was Sultan Ghiyathud-Din of Bengal. As the story goes, once, the Sultan fell sick and was nursed by three of his maid-servants named Sarv (Cypress), Gul (Rose) and Laleh (Anemone). This gave birth to a controversy. The Sultan composed a line—'Saki hadith-sarv u gul u laleh mi-ravad'--and desired a matching line to a couplet. When none in his court could do it, he sent it to Hafiz who wrote for him the ode containing the following verses :

Saki hadith–i–sarv u gul u laleh mi–ravad
Win bahth ba thalatheh–i–ghassaleh mi–ravad.
Shakkar Shikan Shavand hameh tutiyan–i–Hind
Zin kand–i–Parsi ki be Bangaleh mi–ravad
Hafiz zi showki majlisi sultan Ghiyathi Din
Ghafil ma–show ki kari tu az naleh mi–ravad.

O cup–bearer there is talk of the cypress, / the rose and the anemone,/And this discussion goes on with /'the three cleansing draughts.'
All the parrots of India will crack sugar / Through this Persian candy which is going to Bengal.
O Hafiz, be not heedless of the enthusiasm /of / the court of Sultan Ghiyathud–Din,/For thy affair will be furthered by thy lamentation.[6]

He also made a manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrow, the well-known poet of medieval India, which is still preserved in Tashkent.[7] Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Azad writes in his Khizaneh–i–'Amirah (1762–63) that Shah Nu'man, the son of Hafiz, came to India. He died at Burhanpur and was buried at Asir Garh.[8]

It is therefore evident that Hafiz's influence had reached India, particularly Bengal, as early as the fourteenth century. Since then, it has been influencing the literary sensibilities of Indian writers. During the recent past, Savants of Bengal like Ram Mohun Roy[9] and Maharshi Devendranath Tagore have been the eminent scholars of Persian language and literature, whose sincere efforts for the growth of Persian letters in Bengal hardly need any emphasis. Especially, the Tagores have evinced keener interest in Persian thought and culture. That was probably why they were called Pirali[10] Brahmins. The impress of Persian life and manners was so deep on their minds that even the inner apartments of their home were called by Persian names. Tagore writes later on about the Persianized form of his life and home :

> In the speech of the nabobs the servant's quarters were than called 'Tosha–khana.' Even though our house had fallen far below its former aristocratic state, these old high–sounding names 'Tosha–khana,' 'daftar–khana, 'baithak–khana' still clung to it.[11]

In the same way, the inner apartments of the building were called *zenana*[12] and the gatekeeper was called *Durwan* or *Darban* in Persian. *Hookah* formed a part of the household and was offered to visitors after the Muslim fashion. The offering of *Pan* or the beetle to the guests was an essential courtesy. "In those days," says Tagore, "the morning occupation of the women in the inner apartments consisted in preparing piles of *Pan* for the use of those who visited the outer reception room."[13] The Tagores were great hunters and *Shikar* was thought to be their favourite pastime.[14] Even their garments represented the Persian modes. They wore *Chogas* and caps. When Rabindranath was going to Shimla with his father, "a gold-embroidered velvet cap" formed an essential part of his outfit.[15] According to Tagore, "In those days the fashions in food and dress of our recent Mahomedan conquerors had not become obsolete...the outdoor costume for men consisted the Musalman type of *Achkan* and *Jibba*. Pirali Pagri was used ia the family."[16] Sadness overtakes Tagore when he recalls those days in the past when *Majalis* was frequently held at his house.[17] Women of the house observed *Purdah* strictly. The grown ups of the family were not permitted to go inside the *zenana* without taking prior permission. Tagore narrates an episode when the violation of *Purdah* was seriously viewed by their neighbours and relatives :

> No Purdah was observed in my sister-in-law's apartments. That will strike no one as strage today, but it then sounded an unimaginable depth of novelty. A long time even before that when I was a baby, my second brother had returned from England to enter the Civil Service. When he went to Bombay to take up his first post he astonished the neighbourhood by taking off his wife with him before their very eyes. And as if it was not enough to take her away to a distant province, instead of leaving her in the family home, he made no provision for proper privacy on the journey. That was a terrible breach of propriety. Even the relatives felt as if the sky had fallen on their heads.[18]

I personally feel that the way Mrs. Jyotindranath served food to her husband is reminiscent of the Persian domestic refinements. Tagore writes :

> At midday Jyotidada used to go down to the office on the ground floor. *Bouthakrun* peeled and cut fruit and arranged it carefully on a silver plate, along with a few sweatmeats made with her own hands, and strewed a few rose petals over it. In a tumbler was coconut milk or fruit juice or *tal Shans*, fresh palmyra kernels cooled in ice. Then she covered it with a silk kerchief embroidered with flowers, put it on a Moradabad tray, and despatched it to the office at tiffin time, about one or two o'clock.[19]

It may be observed here that the arrangement of the victuals, the silver plate on which they were placed, the strewing of rose petals over it and the silken kerchief embroidered with flowers speak a lot for the Persian tastes and inclinations of the family to which Rabindranath Tagore was born.

Moreover, Persian language and literature formed an essential part of their academic curricula for which competent tutors were engaged.[20] The fact that Persian was the court language of the Muslim rulers might have also encouraged them to learn that language. Tagore read Persian literature with keen interest.[21] He was so fond of Persian culture that even the *Pathans* who came from those territories fascinated him.[22] That was the reason why he "was proud of Islam's contribution to Indian culture, of which he considered it an integral part."[23]

However, it cannot be denied that his father, Devendranath Tagore was primarily responsible for intensifying his love and admiration for the Persian thought and culture. It may be said that Tagore inherited his love for the poet of Shiraz from this celebrated man of Bengal.

The Maharshi, as Devendranath is generally known, "possessed an excellent command of...Persian"[24] and Hafiz was his favourite poet. He was so 'intoxicated' by his verses that during the moments of mystic frenzy they would naturally come on to his lips and sustain his spirits. In Hafiz, he found sympathetic responses to his mystic feeling and experience. The *Bulbul* of Shiraz delighted him with his songs in moments of loneliness. In his Autobiography, the Maharshi admits of his engrossment in Hafizian poetry during the nocturnal tranquillity at Shimla :

> At night I used to leave my bedroom windows open; and

> I enjoyed the cold night wind very much indeed. Wrapping myself in a blanket, and sitting up in bed oblivious of all else, I spent half the night reciting hymns and the verses of Hafiz.[25]

Introducing *The Autobiography*, Eveyln Underhill also observes :

> Released from the tension of worldly business he became ever more deeply immersed in God, finding in the impassioned poetry of the Sufi Hafiz a congenial expression of the burning love which filled his heart.[26]

I feel like giving here some of the verses of Hafiz which the Maharshi recited when he tried to explain his mystic feeling and visions. For instance, when he "comes to know that great sun-coloured Being beyond this darkness," he declares :

> Bad axin nur be-afak dahim az dili khwish
> Ki be-khurshid rasidim u ghubar akhir shud.
>
> Hence forward I shall radiate light from my heart upon the world ; For I have reached the sun, and darkness has vanished.[27]

Expounding his experience of being with God, The Maharshi states :

> Those nights in which I felt His intimate companionship I repeated aloud in ecstasy.
>
> Gu sham' mayarid dar in bazm ki imshab
> Dar majlisi ma mahi rukhi dust taman ast.
>
> Do not bring a lamp into my audience-hall today [sic.].
> To-night, that full moon my Friend is shining here.[28]

And, when these mystic visions cease to come, he asks :

> Ya rab an sham'-i-shab afruz zi kashaneh-i-kist
> Jan-i-ma sukht be-pursid ki jananeh-i-kist
>
> The lamp that turns night into day, in whose chamber is that lamp : It has burnt my life to ashes ; to whom, I ask, has it brought delight ?[29]

"During his last days," states Satyendranath Tagore, "a favourite stanza of Hafiz was *always* on his lips. (emphasis mine) :

> The bell is tolling. I have heard the call, and am ready to depart with all my luggage."[30]

Thus Hafiz became the favourite poet of Rabindranath Tagore also. He felt a deep sense of kinship with the poet of Shiraz and his admiration for him never waned. Naturally, during his voyage to Europe, he was "particularly drawn to the Agha Khan, who read to him a great deal of Hafiz's poetry and discussed Sufism with him."[31] In 1932, he was invited to Iran by Shah Reza Pahlavi. He had been given a hint of this invitation by one of his Parsi friends, Dinshaw Irani. Although Tagore had then grown old enough and his physical conditions deterred him from taking a long journey, "yet, how could he refuse an invitation from the land of his own and his father's favourite poets Hafiz and Sadi ? He accepted with the greatest pleasure."[32] At Bushire, Tagore was given a warm welcome. He was astonished at the enthusiasm with which he was received by the people. He writes about them :

> The Iranians have a national crave for poetry, and they take a poet to to their hearts. In me they saw a poet, and that too an Eastern poet, an Indo-Aryan like themselves. Mohammedans though they are by religion, they have learned to be proud of their Aryanhood.[33]

At Shiraz, he was presented "two scrolls of honour couched in the most flowery language, which pictured Hafiz and Sadi as looking down from heaven and rejoicing over the day's function. Tagore replied with an apt reference to that king of Bengal who had once invited Hafiz to his kingdom, and to himself as the Bengali poet now fortunate enough to be the guest of the Shah and his people."[34]

At Sa'di's Mausoleum, he was given "an ancient text written by Sadi's own hand."[35]

However, when he reached Hafiz's tomb, he stood before it "with closed eyes" for sometime, offered flowers in tribute and then was lost in reverie :

> How many couplets of Hafiz had he heard in his

> childhood from his father, and himself recited ! Memories came back and the beat of the couplets echoed through his head.[36]

The curator presented to him a copy of the Diwan of Hafiz and asked him to "think of some wish," close his eyes and then open it. "At whatever page it opens," said he to him, "you will find your wish set forth, together with the way of its fulfilment."[37] Tagore said in his heart, "I wish that India should escape from the snares of religious begotry." Opening the *Diwan* he *read*: (emphasis mine)

> Can there be any hope that the door of heaven shall open, and an answer be vouchsafed to life's thorny problems which torment us ? Though the door stay shut for them who falsely arrogate to themselves the title of 'religious', yet be assured that to those who worship God sincerely, the door shall verily be opened.[38]

Thereafter, he "sat long in reverie before the tomb rejoicing in his sense of close kinship with Hafiz."[39]

He felt amidst the people of Iran "as if he were back among kinsfolk whom he had lost for thousands of years."[40] As a gesture of goodwill, the Shah of Iran announced on behalf of his people to endow a Professorship of Persian at Vishva-Bharati. Accordingly, Professor Poure Daud, an eminent scholar of ancient Persian literature and a poet in his own right came to Visva-Bharati and became the first occupant of the prestigious chair.[41]

This was, in short, about Tagore's hereditary and acquired responses to Iran and her greatest lyric poet. What remains to be examined now is the impress of Hafizian thought and feeling on his poetical writings. For that purpose, I propose to take up some of the major sufi and hedonistic doctrines and beliefs in Hafiz, which predominate most of Tagore's works.

To begin with, it is well-known that Hafiz had strong predilection for the *Malamatiyeh* mode of Persian sufism. As the word amply denotes, *the Malamatiyeh* or *the Reproached* were a group of Persian sufis who deliberately provoked public contempt and ridicule against themselves. They did it on purpose for concealing their sincerity of love and worship of God from the people. Another motif of this peculiar conduct was their essential dislike

for the demonstrative sort of religious morality and spiritual ostentation. They refrained from ingratiating themselves with the people. They believed that the worldly honour or rank was a snare laid by the devil in their way to God. Hence, showing off devotion to God or exhibiting one's love for Him was highly abominable to them. They desired that their righteousness and piety be recognized and rewarded by God himself and not by his creatures. In their opinion man's relationship with God was to be kept concealed. Their peculiar system of thought enjoined unconcern with popular praise or welcome and exacted heedlessness to social likes and dislikes. Desire to please people or interest in the ways of the world amounted to stopping short at devotion to God and thus losing His grace and blessing. The sufi was therefore called upon to defy and violate the codes of accepted morality in the presence of other people. The reproach that such bearing invited from the public was thought to have two-fold effects. It facilitated detachment from the world and thereafter sole devotion to God, on the one hand, and the subduing of the sufi's self-pride on the other.

Hafiz's acceptance of this system of opinion is evident from a number of his verses. His criticism of the pseudo-sufis or the religious and moral hypocrites, his dislike for self-assumption, clerical ostentation aad pomposity, and his attempts at exciting social reproach, among other things, have found copious expression in his *Diwan*. He concurs with the *Malamatiyeh* sufis in that a genuine lover can never be immune to social condemnation and mockery. These are concomitants of his struggle to purify his love for God. He says :

> Guftam malamat arad gar gerd-i-dust gardam
> Wallahi ma ra'ina hubban bela malamat.
>
> I said : "they will mock, if I go round thy lane."
> "By God ! No love escapes the mocker's bane."[42]

Humiliation and ridicule may offend him, for he is also a human being. But the moment he feels disheartened, he consoles himself, saying that reproach is not a bad thing. It is a source of dignity and honour for a genuine devotee of God. It facilitates the pilgrim's progress. He enthuses himself :

> Makami ahli sa'adat malamat ast aye dil
> Kazin rah-ast bar ishan dar-i-sa'adat baz,[43]

O heart ! Reproach is dignity to the fortunate
This way on them opens Bliss's gate.

(translation mine)

Fear of ignominy or disgrace from society is meaningless for the sufi of this scet. He marches onwards dauntlessly and ignores what the people say or think of his conduct. To encourage the *Malamatiyeh* initiate, Hafiz alludes to Shaikh San'an who gave up all that he possessed for the sake of his love :[44]

Gar muridi rahi ishki fikri badnami makun
Shaikh-i-san'an khirkeh rahni khaneh-i-khummar dasht.

Art thou a novice on Love's path, why fear
lest a bad name be thine ?
San'an the shaikh put off his cowl, and
pawned it in the house of wine.[45]

He praises the *Kalandar* for his unflinching faith in, and adherence to, the principles of the *Malamatiyeh* sufism when he says :

Wakti an shirin kalandar khush ki dar atwari seyr
Zikri tasbih-i-malik dar halkeh-i-zunnar dasht.

Peace to that gentle kalandar[46] who, faithful
shown in all his ways,
Said, e'en when wearing the zunnar,[47] the chaplet
of the monarch's praise ![48]

Therefore he does not aspire after worldly fame or honour and asserts :

Garchih badnamist nazdi 'akilan
Ma nami Khwahim nang u nam ra.

The wise may deem me lost to shame
But no care have I for renown or name.[49]

Tagore gives in to the influence of this *Malamatiyeh* thought of Hafiz. In *Gitanjali*, for instance, his portrayal of the psychological reactions of the mystic against the ridicule and indifference of the people bears witness to the fact. Tagore writes :

WHERE dost thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadows ? They push thee and pass thee by on the dusty road. Taking thee for naught. I

wait hear weary hours spreading my offerings for thee, while passers-by come and take my flowers, one by one, and my basket is nearly empty.

The morning time is past, and then noon. In the shade of evening my eyes are drowsy with sleep. Man going home glance at me and smile and fill me with shame. I sit like a beggar maid, drawing my skirt over my face, and when they ask me, what it is I want, I drop my eyes and answer them not.[50]

It may be observed that the spirit which informs Hafizian verses pervades the above lines also. The devotee conceals his genuine devotion to God and exposes himself willingly to popular ridicule and humiliation. He appears and acts like a beggarmaid to create derogatory reaction in the people as well as to guard himself against the charm of their respect of his holiness. They grow eager to know of his real self and purpose but he does not reveal it to them. In the forthcoming lines, Tagore shows how the people shower reproach on the mystic and how he remains unmoved by, or indifferent to, their insulting behaviour. However, when his human self feels offended, he probably recalls that reproach is dignity for the true devotee, as it leads one nearer to God. This solacing thought changes his pain into pleasure. Tagore writes :

...I laid myself down by the water and stretched my tired limbs on the grass.

My companions laughed at me in scorn; they held their heads high and hurried on ; they never looked back not rested ; they vanished in the distant blue haze. They crossed many meadows and hills, and passed through strange, far-away countries. All honour to you, heroic host of the interminable path ! *Mockery* and *reproach* pricked me to rise, but found no response in me. I gave myself up for lost in the depth of a glad humiliation...in the shadow of a dim delight.

At last, when I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes, I saw thee standing by me flooding my sleep with thy smile. How I feared that the path was long and wear-

isome, and the struggle to reach thee was hard !
(emphases mine)[51]

Needless to stress that the mystic of the above lines bears "mockery and reproach" from the people with the characteristic patience of a *Malamatiyeh* sufi. Like him, he also foregoes worldly trophies which others run after. He is convinced that the *Malamatiyeh* way of devotion is hazardous but it leads one directly to the presence of God. The concluding lines of the above song bear the fact out.

In the same way, Hafiz's attitude towards the problem of predestination or choice of action leaves deep impression on Tagore's mind.

The issue in question has taxed the minds of the wise men down the ages. It still begs solution. What has of course resulted from the almost timeless discussion on it is the division of philosophical thought into two distinct factions. One group of thinkers advocates predestination, the other refutes it. Hafiz has this division of opinion in his mind when he writes :

Kaumi be jidd u jahd nehadand wasli dust
Kaumi digar havaleh beh takdir mi-kunand.[52]

Meeting Friend, to a group, is through
struggle sincere,
It rests on Fate alone, the other declare.
(translation mine).

Those who advocate predestination hold that man's actions are predetermined. God is their author as well as their executor. It is He alone Who governs and guides man to a particular direction. Birth and death and the like are beyond man's control and authority. He is psycho-physically and morally so constituted as he cannot but translate his Creator's will into action. In short, man has not been endowed with the freedom of will or choice, hence, he is not responsible for what he does.

Those who refute the theory of predestination plead that man's inability to regulate death and birth or to restrain instincts, for that matter, does not mean that he is a puppet in the hands of his Creator. Rather, he has been endowed with free-will. He is equipped with the faculties of prudence and discrimination for

directing his choice to a right moral direction. Or else, the very presence of these virtues in man goes meaningless. He is distinguishable from a piece of wood or stone the moment he exercises these faculties. Moreover, the presence of that phenomenon in man which is called the conscience necessitates man's freedom to choose or opt that which he wills. Therefore it is reasonable to believe that man himself is responsible for his deeds.

Hafiz takes to the middle course. He maintains that the functions of man's physical as well as instinctual beings are predestined while his moral being is endowed with freedom of choice. His eye is predestined to see and his ear to hear without any intercharge of functions :

> Be-ruyi yar nazar kun zi dideh minnat dar
> Ki kar-i-dideh hameh az sari basarat kard.[53]
>
> Regard Friend's visage, to the eye obliged be,
> Decided is the function of the eye to see.
>
> (translation mine)

Absolute authority over certain facts and phases of life he may not have, to a people of his choice he may not be born, yet he is not absolutely impotent and inanimate. Rather, he possesses some qualities divine and is an active and inevitable part of the Great Design. He desires, decides and acts. He *does* therefore he is the doer. Hafiz designates this ability of doing *Kasb* or the capacity to acquire or get something by making an effort. It excludes all that has been gifted to man by nature. He argues that man makes an effort only when he wills to achieve something. However, the mysterious power that revives his will to do is God's creation and hence predetermined. Hafiz seems to hold that man's selection of a particular thing is entirely a matter of his own choice for which he himself is accountable.[54] Hence, his emphasis on human endeavour or exertion :

> Mahil ki umr be-bihudeh begzarad Hafiz
> Be-kush u hasil-i-umri aziz ra daryab
>
> While life is thine, consent not HAFIZ
> That it should speed ignobly by ;
> But strive thou to attain the object
> Of thy existence ere thou die.[55]

Nothing can be had in this life without making an effort. If man goes without certain things, it is primarily due to his inertia or inaction. His remonstrance or wailing for his own fault is therefore not plausible. Hafiz says :

Tu be-taksiri khud uftadi azin dar mahrum
Az ki mi-nali, u faryad chira mi-dari
Hafizi kham-tam' sharmi azin kisseh bedar
Kar na kardeh chih ummidi 'ata mi-dari.[56]

Of thine own fault goest thou empty-handed
From this door,
What for to weep now why to remonstrate.
Hafiz of false hope, shame for this fable
Having done naught, hope for no reward.

(translation mine)

The law of causation which operates in nature is equally effective in the life of man. He gets what he strives for and reaps what he sows :

Dahkani salkhurdeh chih khush guft ba pisar
Kaye nuri chesmi man be juz as kishteh nadravi.

How wisely to his son exclaimed the villager
in years sunk deep :
"Light of my eyes, as thou hast sown, expect
thou at the end to reap.[57]

In this world of causality, man himself is the author of his bane. His reluctance to constrain his inertia, his indiscreet bearing and unbriddled lust make him fall prey to misfortune. It is of his own doing, God is above impeachment :

Nist dushnami be-sayyadi azal aye jan-i-man
Amadeh murghi hava gerdan zi bahri daneh ra.[58]

O my soul ! the Eternal Fowler is not to blame,
Down to the grain the roaming fowl himself came.

(translation mine)

The sufi is well aware of this fact. But because of his unconditional love for God and belief in His being the First Cause of all that is, he ascribes his deeds to Him :

Garchih rindi u kharabi gunahi mast-wali
Ashiki guft ki ma ra tu baran mi-dari.[59]

Our own fault is ebriety and wreckage or ruin
The lover says : "Thou hast persuaded me to sin."
(translation mine)

That Tagore in this respect follows Hafiz becomes evident when he writes in his *Gitanjali :*

'PRISONER, tell me, who was it that bound you ?' 'It was my master,' said the prisoner. 'I thought I could outdo everybody in the world in the wealth and power, and I amassed in my own treasure-house the money due to my king. When sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was for my lord, and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure-house.'

'Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain ?' It was I,' said the prisoner, 'who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip.'[60]

It may be marked that, amidst the resounding echoes of Hafizian thoughts in the above lines, the Prisoner emerges as a human counterpart of Hafiz's *Murghi hava gerdan* for he too meets his doom by dint of indiscretion and lust. Hafiz's doctrine of *Kasb* or making an effort to attain something seems to have been reverberating Tagore's mind when he wrote :

And it shall be my endeovour to reveal thee in my actions.[61]

References to Non-dualism or Pantheism do appear in Hafiz's works. But the thought which predominates the major part of his verses emanates from his belief in the phenomenal consubstantiality. It may be termed as neo-dualism in the same manner as *Wahdati Shuhud* or Unity of Appearence is a slightly modified form of *Wahdati Wujud* or Non-dualism. Hafiz's main thrust on

the primal bond of oneness between the creatures themselves distinguishes him from the proponents of the aforesaid two philosophies of life. Nor is he a dualist in the accepted sense of the term. Hence he may be called a neo-dualist. As is generally known, the mystic doctrines of non-dualism and dualism are primarily concerned with the relationship of man with God, or the communion of the temporal with the eternal. The non-dualists feel a sort of interfusion of their being with the Ultimate Being and declare that all is God. In other words, they feel that the creatures and the Creator are identical. In a bit modified way, the promoters of the doctrine of *Wahdati-Shuhud* or Unity of the Appearance maintain that the universe is not identical with God. It is a shadow or reflection of His attributes. The dualists refute these doctrines outright. They hold that man and God are two distinctly separate beings or entities. Man's being cannot transfuse the Supreme Being. The relationship between the two, in their opinion, rests on man's dependence on God. In other words, man needs, He fulfils.

What I mean to say here is that the subject or theme of these philosophies of life is the relationship between man and his Creator. Hafiz goes deeper into the point and extends the scope of dualistic philosophy. For, instead of treating this theme in the traditional mystic manner, he brings to light the consubstantial communion between the living being themselves. This correlationship of the phenomena rests on material as well as spiritual bases. From the former point of view, the communion is evident from the sameness of the elements or substances that have gone into making of the living beings. They may be defined as the universally common properties such as earth, air, water and heat. These elements, all or in part, form components of every living organism and bring about what is called the material or elemental communion. Though the creatures may differ in form, they are identical in their substances. Hafiz explains this sort of material communion of being when he says :

> Zi ittehed-i-hayula u ikhtelaf-i-suvar
> Khirad zi har guli nakshi rukh-i-butan girad.[62]
>
> Because of unity of matter and diversity of forms,
> Intellect makes from every flower images of the faces adored. (translation mine)

Hafiz uses here a very delicate but telling symbol. In the second line of the above verse he does not use the word *yek guli* or one flower, but *har guli* or every flower which can be reasonably taken to stand for every creature, be it on the earth or in the sky.

In addition to this material basis of communion, Hafiz also suggests the spiritual communion of beings, which is due to the presence of the same essence in all the creatures. This essence may be called by different names such as the soul, the spirit, the ether or the life. But, in no way it is identical with that which the Pantheists call the Absolute Being, immanent in every object of creation. According to Hafiz a peculiar but entirely different soul or spirit pervades the entire world of phenomena forming the basis of their identity. He feels what in the words of William Wordsworth is "A motion or spirit that impels/All thinking things, all objects of all thought/And rolls through all things."[63] Iqbal, another Indian poet whose works echo Hafizian thought, also deals with this consubstantial unity of beings. According to him this unity is so perfect and apparent that if the vein of a flower is incised, he is sure, a drop of human blood will fall from it.[64] It is because of this essential interfusion of matter and soul that one feels for another and shares in common weals and woes. This seems to have inspired Sa'adi to proclaim that Adam's children are limbs of one another for they are one essence from the beginning.[65] Because of this oneness of being, a Keats experiences negative capability, a Dimmesdale develops letter A on his breast and a Santiago feels vicariously the bites of the sharks when they attack the marlin. The *Bulbul* of Shiraz, with his characteristic beauty of expression, sings melodiously :

> Chun nasimi subhgahi pardeh-i-gul bar darad
> Khari gham andar dili majruh-i-bulbul bishkanad.[66]
>
> When zephyr rends in the morn the flower's veil
> A thorn breaks in the sore heart of the nightingale.
> (translation mine)

That is why he finds on the tip of his tongue that which is hidden in the heart of his Love,[67] and beholds the heart of the blossom gone blood-red on bulbul's darting unconcern.[68] Hence he feels :

Atash-i-rukhsar-i-gul khirman-i-bulbul besukht
Chihreh-i-khandani sham' afati parvaneh shud.[69]

The flaming cheek of flower set bulbul's barn on fire
And laughing face of taper, the moth's bane conspire.
(translation mine)

That is the reason why he can understand what the bulbul says :

Bulbul zi shakhi-sarv be-gulbangi Pahlavi
Mi-khwand dush darsi makamati ma'navi
Ya'ni biya ki atash-i-Musa namud gul
Ta az derakht nukteh-i-tahkik bishnavi.

In Pahlavi his strain began the bulbul on the
cypress spray,
And in the mystic chant he sang at eventide
of yesterday.
He said : "Draw near, behold the rose has
Moses' fire within her stirred,
"To cause thee from the bush to hear the
Unity's most subtle word."[70]

Tagore expresses his belief in the doctrine of phenomenal consubstantiality of Hafiz in a bit direct and straight-forward manner when he declares :

> The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.
>
> It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.
>
> It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.
>
> I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.[71]

It may be worthy of mention here that the unity of being which he feels in the above lines is not the Vedantic communion of soul with God, but the material and spiritual identity of man

with the world around him. Needless to state that, in spite of his belonging to the people of predominantly Vedantic disposition, Tagore's stress on this form of identity of being owes a great deal to his favourite poet of Shiraz.

As has already been suggested, man's *Tawakkol al Allah* or reliance on God forms the pivot of his relationships with God, according to the Islamic system of thought. *Tawakkol* signifies ceding oneself to God and counting upon him in all circumstances grace and conditions of life. At times of need the sufi seeks help from none else than God because He is the one and the only Saviour and Friend in need. He mistrusts even his own knowledge or expediency. He is convinced that his well-being hinges on God's grace and benevolence. His *tawakkol* gets nourishment from his faith in God's limitless providence and beneficence because He alone is the everlasting owner and provider of all that is. In short, He is the one and the only Competent Being to fulfil man's needs and hence deserves reliance on Himself. Hafiz therefore exhorts :

Aye gadayan-i-kharabat khuda yar-i-shuma-ast
Cheshmi in'am nadarid zi an'ami chand.[72]

God is your friend, O beggars of the tavern,
From one or other animal hope not the guerdon.
(translation mine)

Here, Hafiz has played so delicately upon words as it becomes hard to translate. In Arabic, change of a vowel makes great change in the meaning of a word. In the above couplet the word *in'am* means a prize or guerdon. The word *an'am* is derived by changing the *Karesh* vowel of *in'am* to the *Fath* vowel of *in'am* which means an animal and stands for all living beings. What he means to emphasize here is that the pilgrim's sole dependence on his own virtue, wisdom and skill tantamounts to infidelity. In spite of his being equipped with these qualities he must depend for success on God and feel confidence in His merciful competence to help him.[73] Because He is never tired of helping and sustaining His creation. Hafiz therefore advises :

Kari khud gar be-Khuda baz guzari Hafiz
Aye basi 'eysh ki ba bakhti Khuda dadeh kuni.[74]

Hafiz if your business to Him you assign
God-given pleasures, O how many'd be thine.
(translation mine)

Tagore conveys something like this through his following verses :

O FOOL, to try to carry thyself upon thy own shoulders!
O beggar, to come to beg at thy own door !

Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all and never look behind in regret.[75]

Mark the use of the capital letters in O FOOL. It is not to stress, among other things, that man's greatest folly rests on his non-reliance of God and dependence upon those that are, like himself, imperfect and wanting ? In the other words, it is wise to depend on Him Who is perfect and does not stand in need of anything whatsoever. Tagore therefore prays :

In the night of weariness let me give myself up to sleep without struggle, resting my trust upon thee....

It is thou drawest the veil of night upon the tired eyes of the day to renew its sight in a fresher gladness of awakening.[76]

Hafiz's sincere reliance on God is perhaps one of the reasons why he comes down heavily upon the religious and moral hypocrites of his days. He is convinced that their avowal of dependence on God is fake and fictitious. For at the very root of their ritualistic display lies their hope of gains from man and not from God. The deep impressions of this expectation or desire on their mind and heart go into the making of a *hejab* or veil or screen that obstructs their vision and conceals God from them. *Hejab* or veil in the sufi terminology symbolizes all that turns man's attention from the One and fixes it on the many. They hold that the phenomena or this world of forms, if not gone into carefully, absorbs man's being and arrests his spiritual growth. Apart from this, that proclivity in man is also a *hejab* which fanaticizes him in what he himself opines or what has been tutored to him by his own people. It is *hejab* because it muddles his vision and keeps him

from judging what others say or maintain. This *hejab* forces him to move towards religious dissension and hatred.

The veil which this world of forms itself is irremovable in the present phase of life. God Himself has put it on man's physical eyes so as to keep himself concealed till the day of judgment. However, according to the sufis, the *hejab* which man's engrossment in this world and his own fanaticism weave around his heart is of his making and hence can be removed by means of firm resolution and desired discipline. Its constituent warps and woofs are mundane and acquired. Hafiz has this veil in mind when he criticises the so-called sufis who avow themselves to be the seekers of God but remain immersed in the luxuries of demonstrative religion and the comforts of hypocritical morality. He says :

> Az barayi didani gul yari aziz
> Khwari-i-dahkan u jowr-i-khar my-bayad keshid.[77]
>
> Dear friend, if long you the Flower's vision to see
> Endure piercing pricks of thorn, the abject peasant be.
> (translation mine)

In order to see a blooming flower in one's garden, one has to undergo the trials and toils of a gardener. That is to say, that God can be realised by toiling like a lowly peasant and not by exploiting the innocent credibility of the people through ritual ostentation.

Tagore seems to be performing an accompaniment to Hafiz, when he intones :

> LEAVE this chanting and singing and telling of beads !
>
> He is there where the tiller is tilling the ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil !
>
> Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense ! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained ? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow,[78]

As has been already hinted, God is unseeable to man's physical eyes in this world. However, His presence may be felt in and around by shaking the veils off one's inner eyes. When this is done, man begins to see things through and gains the consciousness of His immediate neighbourdood. In the Hafizian sense, if 'the world is too much with us,' God's vision is impossible. For the dust which the storming corporeal desires raise around man blurs his eyes. The sooner this dust goes, the clearer becomes the vision and the happier the seeker.[79] Hafiz says :

Hejabi chihreh-i-jan mi-shavad ghubari tan-am
Khusha dami ki azin chihreh pardeh bar figanam[80]

My frame's dust has veiled the darling Soul's look
Happy the moment this veil from face of mine's shook.
(translation mine)

Man is himself responsible for impairing his consciousness of God's immediate Presence. It is his own self that veils his eyes. The sufi, according to Hafiz, has to cast this veil off his heart to see the reality in and around him.[81] His bodily eye cannot see two opposite things at a time. He cannot look up at the sky the moment he is looking down at the earth. Till the outer eye is involved in this attractive world, the inner eye cannot visualize Him.[82] It is only when the veil is gone that serenity percolates through man's being and he feels :

Be-surat as nazari ma agarchih mahjub ast
Hamisheh dar nazari khatiri muraffehi mast.[83]

Away from our eye's range though He wills to be
In eyes of our placid heart rests for ever He.
(translation mine)

Tagore's obligation to these thoughts of Hafiz is apparent when he writes in his *Gitanjali* :

This screen that thou has raised is painted with innumerable figures with the brush of the night and the day. Behind thy seat is woven in wondrous mysteries of curves, casting away all barren lines of straightness.[84]

And again,

> If it is not my portion to meet thee in this my life then let me ever feel that I have missed thy sight—let me not forget for a moment, let me carry the pangs of this sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours.[85]

As the above lines evidently show, Tagore stands in full sympathy with Hafiz *viz-a-viz* the impossibility of man's seeing God face to face in this phase of life. The "screen" or *hejab* which this physical existence weaves around human eye incapacitates man from seeing the Absolute Being. What he can however attain by making an effort and with full confidence in God's benevolence is the consciousness of His presence in as well as out of his being. It is about this consciousness of His being at hand which inspires Hafiz to state :

> Kas na danist ki manzil gahi ma'shuk kuja-ast
> In kadar hast ki bangi jarasi mi-ayad.[86]
>
> To none is known the Palace, my Darling took to dwell,
> Of course there is audible the tolling of some bell.
> (translation mine)

That Tagore was not taken by this Hafizian thought becomes unconvincing when one reads the following lines in his *Gitanjali:*

> I have not seen his face, nor have I listened to his voice ; only I have heard his gentle footsteps from the road before my house.[87]

Further, according to the Persian sufi, the pilgrim in his progress jettisons all that slows down or endangers his spiritual voyage. Getting released from cordoral bondages, he arrives, at a stage which in sufism is termed as "La" or Naught or "Void." It is here that he loses all sense of belonging to the world, all desire of material gains, all pride in racial or ancestral eminence that had so far held him in tight grid. Henceforward begins the realm of the Absolute Being and the sufi feels himself to be gradually approaching Him. Now he begins to see things through. Secret after secret go revealed to him. According to Hafiz, the sufi reaches the phase of "La" or void by dissociating himself from

the world of the sense. He emphasizes this disentanglement when he says :

> Tu kaz sarayi tabiyat nami ravi birum
> Kuja be-kuyi hakikat guzar tawani kard.
>
> Thou who ne'er hast issued from the shrine
> of sense,
> How to Truth's high pathway canst thou
> journey hence ?[88]

What he means to convey here is that in order to reach "Truth's high pathway," one has to get purged of all that is gross or impure in the spiritual as well as material sides of one's being. Alluding to nature, he says that by the Law, a jonquil flower will never grow on zinc or iron. Similarly, one cannot see anything in a mirror that has gone dark with earthly vapours.[89] Hence, rinsing the dross out of one's heart and mind is of paramount importance for attaining the mystic consciousness of God. For the "benisons of Heaven are won by purity alone/Else would not pearl and coral spring from every clod and stone·''[90] This sort of purgation is effected by banishing from one's thought and feeling everything excepting God. In the Hafizian sense of the term, it is to dissociate from the many and associate with the One.[91] Hence, he declares :

> Hafiz an ruz tarab nameh-i-ishki tu nivisht
> Ki kalam bar sari asbabi dili khurram zad.
>
> HAFIZ his love-scroll
> To thyself addressed
> When he had cancelled
> His heart loved best.[92]

Perhaps the avowal of the pseudo-sufis astonishes him when they assert that God dwells in their hearts. He asks himself how they could accomodate Him in their congested hearts.[93]

Tagore echoes these Hafizian thoughts when he writes :

> My song has put off her adonments. She has no pride of dress and decoration. Ornaments would mar our union; they would come between thee and me ; their jingling would drown thy whispers,[94]

or,

> The child who is decked with prince's robes and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all pleasure.[95]

So much for the influence of the Hafizian sufi thought on Tagore. But Hafiz is not simply a sufi. He is an epicurean too. Like Omar Khayyam, he also believes in making the fullest use of this ephemeral life. In this sphere also, Tagore follows the poet of Shiraz. This point however needs some elucidation.

So to speak, Hafiz is a mystic-materialist. Most of his verses are highly tempered with his epicurean conviction. He sets a high value on the sufficiency of life lived for its sake and to have lived intensely is enough for him. He cares little for future pleasures professed by religion. Rather, he rejects them. A large number of his verses remind Khayyam's hedonistic veins. He enjoys life himself as well as enjoins others to make the fullest use of it. He is convinced that "Deliverance" is not for him "in renuciation." That is the reason why he takes no notice of the clerical assurance of future pleasure. Instead, he supports the view of enjoying the present life to the highest degree. With a view to belittling the future hopes of a saint, he says :

> Zahid agar be-hur u kusur ast umidwar
> Ma ra sharab khaneh kusur ast u yar hur
>
> While sighs the saint for huris,
> and palaces above,
> The wine-house is my palace,
> the huri, one I love.[96]

Therefore no wish to forego the material gratification of the present and acquire holiness through mortification and penance. He seems to inquire of the recluse—"Can toping aught in common with works and worship own ?/ Where is regard for sermons, where is the rebeck's tone ?"[97] Rather, he advises him not to recount the story of what is *nisyeh* or credit to him who possesses as *nakd* or cash the companion like a *huri* and the place like the Garden of Eden.[98] This is the real and ready salvation of man--his deliverance here and now.[99] Hence his retort :

Why bid me, zealot, to Heaven's
orchard rove ?
This chin's fair apple than that
grove is better.[100]

He follows that religion which forbids him to renounce what is within his easy reach in this tangible world. So he will not exchange the *behishti nakd* of this life for the *behishti nisyeh* of that which is beyond his reach at present.

Hafiz goes after the principle of pleasure with almost religious fervour and is not prepared to give up tasting red lips and drinking cups of wine. He asserts :

Man na khwaham kard tarki la'l-i-yar u jam-i-mey
Zahidan ma'zur daridam ki in-am mazhab ast.[101]

Renounce will I not my Love's red
nor wine-cup's use,
That's become my faith O zealots go,
me please excuse.

(translation mine)

Rather, he wants to proselytize them, saying :

Baghi firdows latif ast walikin zinhar
Tu Ghanimat shumar in sayeh-i-beyd u labi kisht.

Fair though Paradise's garden, deign to my
aduise to yield :
Here enjoy the shading villow, and the
border of the field.[102]

Tagore owes a great deal to Hafiz as regards his epicurean trend of thought, which is evident from a number of his poetical and other writings. For instance, in his letter dated SHELIDAH, October 1891, he writes :

> I cannot make up my mind to sacrifice this precious gift of life in a self-wrought famine, and disappoint the world and the hearts of men by fasts and meditations and constant argument. I count it enough to live and die as a man, loving and trusting the world, unable to look on it either as a delusion of the Creator or a snare

> of the Devil. It is not for me to strive to be wafted away into the airiness of an Angel.[103]

In another letter dated 19th August 1894, while speaking for the agreeable simplicity of the Vedanta as compared to other 'theories' of relationship between the creation and the Creator, he does not rule it out that it has possibly dispelled from the minds of many people "all doubt as to the Universe and its first Cause." But he affirms that "the Vedanta has certainly simplified it half way, by cutting the Gordian knot and leaving out Creation altogether."[104] It seems to him amazing "how the human mind should have found room for such a thought."[105] Focusing on the worlds of Nature and man, which in the moonlight "seem an illusion or *Maya*, he continues :

> ...and yet they cling to and draw the mind and heart more truly than truth itself, which is abstraction, and it becomes impossible to realise what kind of salvation there can be in freeing oneself from them.[106]

It is this strong will to enjoy life which impels him to proclaim in the very *Gitanjali* which is widely acclaimed as a collection of spiritual songs :

> DELIVERANCE is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.[107]

or,

> No, I will never shut the doors of my senses.[108]

He further asserts :

> Yes, all my illusions will burnish into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love.[109]

It is therefore not the least surprising that he does not agree with Buddha in renouncing the world of the senses.[110] The idea of disowning it, he rejects out right :

> No my friends, I shall never...retire into the forest solitude, if rings no merry laughter in its echoing shade and if the end of no saffron mantle flutters in the winds; if its silence is not deepened by soft whispers.
> I shall never be an ascetic.[111]

It may be noted here that the factors which generate epicurean proneness in Tagore are almost similar to those that induced it in Hafiz. The poet-philosopher of Shiraz, however, adduces reasons for his devotion to the principle of pleasure. For instance, the enigmatic and ephemeral nature of life which so often distresses his mind. Life, he feels, is a tangle—a puzzle over which "Geometers may ponder, but none such knot undo."[112] And man !

> Man is a riddle ;
> And but vain pretence
> Is his, O HAFIZ
> Who would solve its sense.[113]

The more he ratiocinates over the world, the stronger becomes his belief that "This thoroughfare of clashing din to Reason's eye presents/The restless and unstable course of earth and earth's events."[114] Eventually, with "calm of mind all passion spent," he arrives at the conclusion :

> Hadith az mutrib u mey gu u raz-i-dahr kamtar ju
> Ki kas nakshud u nakshayad be-hikmat in mu'imma ra.
>
> Of minstrels and of wine discourse; care little
> how the skies revolve :
> By wisdom no one has solved yet—and shall not
> this enigma solve.[115]

In addition to its being problematic, life is ephemeral, too. Its "unstable fabric has on the air its base."[116] In this state of mind, he perceives "the restless bell" sounding the command : "'Tis time to blind thy litters on."[117] So he utters, "On ocean's lip we wait Death's rounds"—Death ! Which conquers man body and soul, and is his real predicament. For, in spite of being equipped with the wonderful device of protection, which he calls brain or intellect and which makes him superior to all other living beings, he is consigned to nothingness by Death. Death cannot differentiate between the fool and the wise. As the appointed time comes, Aristotle breathes his last like a dunce ! Hafiz says :

> Mazan dam zi hikmat ki dar wakti marg
> Aristu dahad jan chu bichareh kurd.

Vaunt not thy love;[118] for at the hour of death
As the poor Kurd[119], Aristu yields his breath.[120]

He also seems to sustain the instinctual validity of seeking pleasure. Pleasure is the law of nature. Or else, the object of pleasure lose their sense of being. The irrestible power of attraction which they so pleasingly wield has no other purpose than to allure man to gratify his senses. His body has been created by the same Creator. It has been given certain rights on man whose negation tantamounts to defying the law of nature and hence being ingrate to the Creator. The zealots may condemn the principle of pleasure, Nature does not. Or wherefore the recurrence of spring or the rejuvenation of nature is, if it is not for reviving biological desires in man. That is the reason why "the rose upon the meadow from Nothing into Being spirings."[121] Seeking gratification is instinctive for none can keep a bee from lingering about the honey[122] or a true lover from going after his love.[123] Moreover, like man himself, these objects of pleasure are also short-lived. The rose blooms for a while and "as the days of life which passes, is the brief week that she shall last."[124] He considers this brief appearance of the object of enjoyment as highly valuable : "for priceless is her worth, the converse of the Flower/That way she came, by this her path from the green bower shall be."[125] According to him, non-acceptance of the principle of pleasure is symptomatic of the morbid condition of heart. For the wholesome heart, it is natural to desire the gratification of the senses. He says :

Kadah magir chu Hafiz magar be-nalayi chang
Ki bastah and bar abrishami tarab dili shad.

As HAFIZ, drain no goblet
Unless the harp resound :
To the silk string of pleasure
The joyous heart is bound.[126]

Therefore, "Whenever a glad time occurs," he esteems it as his prize and enjoys it to the full.[127] Speaking to himself he says :

Bazmi eysh u mowsimi shadi u hangami tarab
Panj ruz ayyami ishrat ra ghanimat dan dila.

A happy day, a time of mirth, a season

for enjoying wine :
Five days shall the occasion last—
make it a prize, O heart, while thine.[128]

By making an allusion to the fall of man, Hafiz perhaps gives the most ingenious argument in favour of his hedonistic attitude towards life. He says that it is not he alone who advocates gratification of the senses, Adam, his father also left Paradise for that purpose :

Na man az khaneh-i- takwa badar uftadam u bas
Pidar-am niz behishti abad az dast bahesht.

From the still retreat of virtue not the
first am I to roam,
For my father also quitted his eternal Eden home.[129]

He reiterates :

Dar eyshi nakd kush ki chun abkhur namand
Adam bahesht rowzeh-i-darus-salam ra.

Strive always after ready bliss; for Adam,
when by fortune left,
Abandoned the abode of Peace, and of the
Garden's joy was reft.[130]

Therefore he prefers enjoying life to pondering over its insoluble riddle or wailing for the "days that wind-ward fleet."[131] And asks :

Mutrib kujast ta hameh mahsuli zuhd u'ilm
Dar kari bangi barbat u awazi ney kunam

Where bides the minstrel ? For at once my zeal
and learning's meed
I offer for the harp and lyre, and the melodious reed.[132]

He will not hear the songs that tell of the saddest thoughts. So, he instructs the minstrel :

Mutriba majlisi uns ast ghazal khwan u sarud
Chand guyi ki Chunin raft u chunan khwahed shud.

O minstrel ! Only friends are here; sing many
a song a nd lay :

How long repeat : "Things this way were,
and things that way
Shall be.[133]

Having offered all his "zeal and learning's meed" to the minstrel "for the harp and lyre, and the melodious reed," he addresses Everyman :

Khiz u dar kaseh-i-zar abi taarbnak andaz
Pishtar zan ki shavad kaseh-i-sar khak andaz
Akibat manzili ma wadi-i-khamushan ast
Haliya gholgholeh dar gumbadi af lak andaz.

Arise, and fill the golden goblet with water
that gives mirth,
Befere the goblet of thy head be full of earth.

The valley of the silent people shall be
at last our home :
Now is the time to raise thy shout
to heaven's high dome.

He repents for his once having performed the vow of abstenance—

Towbah kardam ki na-busam labi saki u kunun
Miguzam lab ki chira gush be-nadan kardam.

I who once vowed no Saki's lips to kiss
Now bite my lip for heeding fools amiss—[134]

and swears :

Hasha ki man be-mowsimi gul tarki mey kunam
Man lafi 'akl mizanam in kar khy kunam.

While lasts the rose, the Lord forbid that
I should drink not wine ;
Shall I who of my reason boast such boon
as that resign ?[135]

Naturally, for him deliverance is not in renunciation. He sets no value on mortification and penance and will never strave his sensuous or sensual being. In his opinion rejection of life and its pleasures does not stand to reason. He says :

Biya ki towbah zi la'li nigar u khandeh-i-jam
Tasawwurist ki 'aklash nami kunud tasdik

Come ! Penance for a fair one's lips, and
for the brimmer bright
Is a wild freak which solid sense
proves contrary to right.[136]

Therefore he will not go without kissing and embracing "the sugar-lipped, the Fair of rosy frame" [137] and drink wine interminably. He has found the elixir of life :

Labash mi busam u dar mi kesham mey
Be-abi zindegani burdah am pey.[138]

Drink I wine and her sweet lip I kiss
To me the elixir of life hence is this. (translation mine)

Here, he has discovered the only antidote to life's predicament :

Dawayi tu Dawayi tust Hafiz
Labi nushash labi nushash labi nush

HAFIZ, a medicine for thy woe,
A medicine must thou sip,
No other than lip so sweet,
That lip so sweet, that lip.[139]

This was an outline of Hafiz's hedonistic philosophy of life, which has exerted a powerful effect on Tagore's mind. His own epicurean convictions seem to have found new directions in Hafiz. As his works reveal, he has made the most of Hafizian ideas and has evidently conformed to them. His view of the world and this life, his rejection of asceticism and avowal of faith in the doctrine of pleasure as well as his pleas for the celebration of the moment of joy, tend to confirm that he did respond to Hafiz who said :

Benush jam-i-subuhi be-nalayi daf u chang
Bebus ghabghabi saki be-naghmeh-i-ney u'ud.[140]

As stated above, Hafiz has recourse to rejoicing because this world is a "thoroughfare of clashing din", restless and instable. Tagore looks at this world from almost the same angle of vision when he says :

> This world is the world of wild storms kept tame with the music of beauty.[141]

Similarly, he feels that this life is ephemeral and that both the lover and the "Fair one" are essentially evanescent. The moment of joy is so brief that "Like a dew drop while it laughs it dies."[142] He observes :

> The lotus blooms in the sight of the sun, and loses all that it has. It would not remain in bud in the eternal mist.[143]

The following verse which contains his reaction after his lady love has left him and gone on her way, speaks, aloud for his deep sense of life's speedy passage. For a while after her departure, he thinks of bemoaning his unrequited love, but

> But ah, my evil fortune, time is short. Youth wanes year after year; the spring days are fugitive; the frail flowers die for nothing, and the wise man warns me that life is but a dew drop on the lotus leaf.[144]

Perhaps, "the wise man" referred to above is none other than Hafiz issuing this warning :

> Saki, on ocean's lip we wait Death's rounds,
> Enjoy ! 'twixt lip and mouth the bounds
> As nothing are.[145]

Therefore he will not neglect all that is at hand and go on pining for that which is beyond his reach. That will be "rude and foolish, for time is short."[146] He speaks to his heart :

> LISTEN, my heart, to the whispers of the world with which it makes love to you.[147]

He believes that those who preach negation of this world are not alive in the true sense of the term. Non-acceptance of the world defeats the very purpose of man's life on this earth.[148] Hence, he hastens "to gather...flowers lest they are plundered by the passing winds." It 'quickens [his] blood and brightens [his] eyes to snatch kisses that would vanish if [he] delayed."[149] He wants to enjoy every phase of this world and so, he makes a call :

> Then, come my rainy nights with pattering feet; smile, my golden autumn; come, careless April, scattering your kisses abroad.[150]

Echoes of Hafizian thought are obvious in song number XXXVI of his *The Gardener* which contains his implied belief in the instinctual basis of pleasure. The woman in the song initially resents the advances of her lover when he whispers endearments to her or implants a kiss on her cheek. But when he is gone away in dejection, she weeps and asks herself : "Why does he not come back ?"[151]

Tagore turns a deaf ear to ascetic proposition. He seems to be asking the zealot : "Is not this earth also His who made heaven ?" When no answer comes, he further questions : "Where is heaven ?[152] Rejecting the belief that it is beyond "the rhythm of day and night,"[153] he explains :

> But your poet knows that its eternal hunger is for time and space, and it strives evermore to be born in the fruitful dust.[154]

He seems to be speaking to the ascetic when he says :

> Heaven is fulfilled in your sweet body, my child, in your palpitating heart.[155]

Expressing his firm belief in pursuing pleasure in this ephemeral phase of life, he argues :

> Our life is short; it yields but a few
> days for love.
> Were it for work and drudgery it would
> be endlessly long.[156]

Naturally he accepts this world as real and enjoyable. Though it seems to be pregnant with clamouring "restless life,"[157] yet it is as charming and vernal as the body of his lady-love. For him, the night of this world is a corporeal entity which he so gladly enjoys :

> I FEEL thy beauty, dark night, like that of the loved woman when she has put out the lamp.[158]

It may not be impertinent to remind here what Hafiz holds about

this world and all that it contains. According to him the world is easy and short-lived. In other words, the objects of pleasure which exist in this world are at hand and easy to reach. They are scanty too. It is not, therefore, sagacious to turn one's back upon what is at hand and short-lived and be contented with the mere promises of pleasure in the distant future.[158] How Tagore conforms to this observation of his favourite poet may be marked in the following lines :

> Take to your bosom with a smile what is
> easy and simple and near.
> Today is the festival of phantoms that
> know not when they die.[159]

Recommending the celebration of the moment of joy, Hafiz illustrates a very interesting situation, which assumes almost universal proportion. It is when the object of pleasure or the "Loved one," wielding all possible charms of provocation, comes to the lover all of a sudden. He states :

> With ruffled locks, with sweat-drops dripping,
> beaming with smile, and from the cup,
> With a rent shirt, and singing ghazals,
> a flagon in one hand held up,
> Narcissus which sought for mischief,
> lips which permitted sighs to fleet,
> My loved one at the hour of midnight came
> to my pillow for a seat.
> I heard, for in my ear 't—was whispered,
> in accents render with regret;
> "O lover ! thou who long hast loved me,
> hath slumber overcome thee yet ?[160]

Under such a situation, he declares, one who is really a sage will never allow himself to discard the opportune moment of gratification thus offered. He says :

> The sage to whom such wine is offered
> after the light of day's decline,
> Most certainly is love's denier,
> if he loth to worship wine.[161]

Tagore takes it upon himself never to be "the sage" who denies such an opportunity. He says :

> It is heroic to hug one's sorrow
> and determine not to be consoled.
> But a fresh face peeps across my
> door and raises its eyes to my eyes.
> I cannot but wipe away my tears and
> change the tune of my song.[162]

He is attuned to the Hafizian way of thinking when he portrays Nature as supporting the hedonistic principle of life. For instance, song number XII of *The Gardener* throbs with a variety of hedonistic pleasure, with Nature as an active participant. The lake ripples pruriently to cling round the woman's feet and its waves rise "a-tiptoe to kiss [her] neck."[163]

In a number of his verses, Tagore upholds the gratification of the senses and pleads for enjoying this world as it is available to man. Like Hafiz, he declines to go deeper into the mysteries of life. Its surface beauty and its readiness to gratify material desire are enough for him. He soliloquises :

> BE not concerned about her heart, my heart : leave it in the dark.
>
> What if her beauty be of a figure and her smile merely of the face ? Let me take without question the simple meaning of her glances and be happy.
>
> I care not if it be a web of delusion that her arms wind about me, for the web itself is rich and rare, and the deceit can be smiled at and forgotten.
>
> Be not concerned about her heart, my heart: be content if the music is true, though the words are not to be believed; enjoy the grace what dances like a lily on the rippling, deceiving surface, whatever may lie beneath.[164]

He avows that "a sudden warm breath of spring [comes] from the unknown island of [his] heart" when the end of a woman's skirt touches him.[165] She walks "by the riverside path with the full pitcher upon her hips" and when she peeps at him through her "fluttering veil," her glaring look comes upon

him "from the dark like a breeze that sends a shiver through the rippling water and sweeps away to the shadowy shore."[166] The sensual excitement rises to a higher degree when he begins to perceive the woman's "pleading hands vocal in a touch" and her "arms to stammer when, had they not, they would have become youth's garland round [his] neck."[167] What really exists for him now is the moment of joy, all else becomes *Maya.* Spasmodically, he utters :

> No mystery beyond the present ;
> no striving for the impossible
> no shadow behind the charm ;
> no groping the depth of dark.[168]

"The wise man," perhaps, has whispered to him to say :

> NEVER be afraid of the moments—thus sings the voice of the everlasting.[169]

And again, when he says :

> The noise of the moment scoffs at the music of the eternal.[170]

He makes up his mind not to "stray out of all words into the ever silent," and not raise his hands "to the void for things beyond hope.[171] That which is enjoyable is easy to get now. The "now" passes, it metals into nothingness. Hence,

> HANDS cling to hands and eyes linger on eyes : thus begins the record of our hearts.
>
> ... ...
>
> It is a game of giving and withholding, revealing and screening again ; some smiles and some little shyness, and some sweet useless struggles.[172]

That is the reason why he wants to change this world into a single moment of joy when he tells his lady-love :

> Tearing the veil from my breast I shall make our bed on the floor ; and one kiss and one sleep of delight shall fill our small boundless world.

Needless to state how, in the night, he plays the "game of death" with his "bride" in song number LXXXII of his *The Gardener*.[173]

This conviction of celebrating the pleasures of life goads him to dissent from the scriptural injunction of *Sanyas* or the forest seclusion for 'Man.' He rather "proclaims that the forest hermitage is only for the young. For it is the birth place of flowers and the haunt of birds and bess ; and hidden nooks are waiting there for the thrill of lovers' whispers. There the moonlight, that is all one kiss for the *malati* flowers, has its deep message, but those who understand it are far below fifty.

And alas, youth is inexperienced and wilful, therefore it is but meet that the old should take charge of the household, and the young take to the seclusion of forest shades and the severe discipline of courting.[174]

Hafiz dismissed the exhorting zealot, retorting :

> If love, coy looks and revel
> To HAFIZ dear have grown
> Nature has rendered youth-time
> To many a strange way prone.[175]

Tagore dismisses the moral critic of his pursuit of pleasure, saying :

> REVEREND sir, forgive this pair of sinners. Spring winds today are blowing in wild eddies: driving dust and dead leaves away, and with them your lessons are lost.
>
> Do not say, father, that life is vanity. For we have made truce with death for once, and for a few fragrant hours we two have been made immortal.[176]

His poetry is reverberant with the echoes of Hafizian principle of unreason. According to Hafiz, prudence or calculation cannot enable man to find the key to life's riddle. It is unreason alone that "opens wide the gate of times serene."[177] He sought to do it through a systematic or intelligible order. He wasted his youth[178] and lost his "silver" and his "gold" to the winds.[179] The whole "scroll" of his being was consigned to flames.[180] Gone grey-headed, he repents having wasted his springtime[181] and is prepared gladly to draw his pen "through Reason's scrawl."[182] For calming his "intellectual brain for aye,"[183] he demands ;

As reason is a stubborn thing,
Wine's cord, its neck to wring
Bring hither.[184]

With his characteristic subtlety of thought and the beauty of symbolic expression, he suggests :

If thou desire at dead of night
the sun's clear beams to hail,
From the vine's daughter's rosy face
see that the veil
Be cast.[185]

Therefore he summons the Saki to give him wine till reason sinks deep into oblivion.[186] He asks him :

Come hither, on the stream of wine
let now my bark
Be cast ;
Into the souls of old and young
let riot's spark
Be cast.[187]

Whether or not Tagore ignites this 'riot's spark' in the souls of 'old and young,' deplores his reliance on reason in the past and decides to throw himself down into the wine-jar of Hafizian unreason, I leave for the reader to judge after going through the following lines :

O MAD, superbly drunk ;
If you kick open your doors and play
the fool in public ;
If you empty your bag in a night, and
snap your fingers at prudence ;
If you walk in curious paths and play
with useless things ;

Reck not rhyme or reason ;

If unfurling your sails before the
storm you snap the rudder in two,
Then I will follow you, comrade,
and be drunken...

I have wasted my days and nights

in the company of steady wise neighbours.
Much knowing has turned my hair grey,
and much watching has made my sight dim.
For years I have gathered and heaped up
scraps and fragments of things :

Crush them and dance upon them, and
scatter them all to the winds.
For I know 'tis the height of wisdom
to be drunken...

I swear to surrender this moment all
claims to the ranks of the decent.
I let go my pride of learning and
judgement of right and of wrong.
I will shatter memory's vessel, scattering
the last drop of tears.
With the foam of the berry-red wine
I will bathe and brighten my laughter.
The badge of the civil and staid I'll
tear into shreds for the nonce.
I'll take the holy vow to be...drunken.[188]

(emphases mine)

Sometimes Tagore touches those heights of poetic excellence and subtlety and suavity of expression which are native to the Persian poet. In more than one instance, his thought runs parallel to that of Hafiz and the thematic resonance becomes undeniable. For example, when Hafiz feels the pangs of separation he finds himself restless like *kabab* on fire.[189] Away from his love, Tagore's "heart knows no rest nor respite," and he feels to be undergoing "an endless toil in a shoreless sea of toil.[190] Likewise, Hafiz surrenders himself to his Love and supplicates her to decide his fate quickly, for delay is unbearable to him.[191] Tagore however employs a more delicate symbol to express this desire, when he says :

PLUCK this little flower and take it, delay not ! I fear lest it droop and drop into the dust.[192]

It would seem that, while composing the lines with which his *Gitanjali* begins, Tagore felt rings of the following couplets of Hafiz which convey his sense of the feebleness of his body and his

observation of the cycle of rejuvenation in nature. He says :

Az wujud an kadar-am nam u nishanist ki hast
Warna az za'f dar an ja asari nist ki nist.[193]

Nakhwahed in chaman az sarv u laleh khali mand
Yaki hami vavad u digri hami ayad.[194]

In view of the above facts, I venture to conclude that the magic of Hafizian verses has cast a powerful spell on Tagore's mind. His father was a zealous devotee of Hafiz sufi thought and experience. Tagore is influenced by his mystic as well as hedonistic ideas and feelings. It is therefore pertinent to say that Tagore's rose-garden is resonant with the melodious lays of the *Bulbul of* Shiraz.

REFERENCES

1. Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, rpt., (Calcutta : The Signet Press, 1946), p. 162.
2. *Ibid.* p. 159.
3. Evelyn Underhill in Rabindranath Tagore, tr. *One Hundred Poems of Kabir* (Macmillan India, 1973), p. 2.
4. Az kal u kili Madrisa hali dilam giraft
   Yak chand niz khidmati ma'shuk u mey kunam.

   Of the nice points the school propounds my heart weary grown ;/My services for a while I'd give to wine and love alone.
   Herman Bicknell, *Hafiz and Shiraz : A Selection from His Poems* (Tehran : Imperial Organization for Social Services, April 1976) p. 209. Hereafter cited as *Bicknell.*
5. Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell, *Poems for the Divan of Hafiz*, quot. E.G. Browne in *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. III (Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 286.
6. Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* vol. III (Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 287,
7. A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958), p. 330.
8. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, p. 289.
9. He "was willing to serve in England as the Mogul emperor's representative, and was much influenced by Muslim thought." Edward Thomp-

son, *Rabindranath Tagore : Poet and Dramatist* (London : Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 12.

10. Edward Thompson makes an attempt to trace the origin of this word—"(Persian pir + ali. A *pir* is a saint : 'chief saint' : the word is somewhat sarcastic one, hard to translate." Edward Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore : Poet and Dramatist*, p. 12.

I would like to point out here that the meaning of the word *Pirali* has not so far been fully appreciated. That this word is "somewhat sarcastic one" cannot be gainsaid. Many a scholar maintains that *Pirali* has been used derogatorily for the Tagores on account of their being too much with the Muslims.

This seems to be a partial view of the fact, if one takes into consideration the reverence and regard with which the Tagores used this word. As Thompson himself puts it, the "tension of the two chief communities in Bengal is a matter of quite recent times." The Tagores had migrated to Bengal earlier than the beginning of communal consciousness in that part of the country. Then also, they were called the Piralis. Therefore the word cannot be restricted to its derogatory sense alone. Who or what Pirali is needs further investigation. But I feel that Pirali is a miss-spelt from of the personal name Pir Ali. The deep love and profound regard of the Tagores for the Muslim thought suggest that it might have been the name of some Muslim sufi to whom they had sworn allegiance. Moreover, their use of *Pirali Pagri* bears this fact out. In sufi cults *Pagris* or *Choghas* are bestowed by the chief saint on his followers or disciples either to confirm one's succession to the holy seat or to acknowledge one's discipleship or initiation into that particular cult. *Pagris* or *Choghas* given for this purpose are invariably named after the chief saint

11. Rabindranath Tagore, *My Boyhood Days*, trans. Marjorie Sykes (Calcutta : Visva Bharati Bookshop, 1941), p. 14.
12. Rabindranath Tagore, *Reminiscences*, Indian edn. (London : Macmillan & Co. Limited, 1961), p. 101.
13. *My Boyhood Days*, pp. 37-38.
14. Tagore, *Reminiscences*, p. 70.
15. *Ibid.* p. 78.
16. *Ibid.* p. 123.
17. *Idem.*
18. *Reminiscences*, p. 123.
19. *My Boyhood Days*, p. 75.
20. *Reminiscences*, p. 61.
21. Rabindranath Tagore, *Glimpses of Bengal* (Calcutta : Macmillan and Company Limited, 1948), p. 131.
22. *Reminiscences*, p. 68.
23. Edward Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore : Poet and Dramatist*, p. 12.
24. G.D. Khanolkar, *The Lute and the Plough : A Life of Rabindranath Tagore*, trans. Thomas Gay, (Bombay : The Book Centre Private Ltd., 1963), p. 9. Hereafter cited as *The Lute*.

25. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, *The Autobiography*, trans. Satyendranath Tagore and Indira Devi, (London : Macmillan & Co. Limited, 1961), p. 250. Hereafter referred to as *The Autobiography*.
26. *The Autobiography*, p. 34.
27. *Ibid.* p. 252.
28. *Ibid.* pp. 250-251.
29. *Ibid.* p. 250.
30. *Ibid.* p. 27.
31. *The Lute*, p. 235.
32. *Ibid.* p. 319.
33. *Ibid.* p. 320.
34. *The Lute*, pp. 320-321.
35. *Ibid.* p. 321.
36. *Idem.*
37. *Idem.*
38. *Idem.*
39. *Idem.*
40. *Ibid.* p. 322.
41. *The Lute*, p. 323.
42. *Bicknell*, p. 241.
43. Maulana Kazi Sajjad Hosain, trans. *Diwan-i-Hafiz* (Delhi : Sabrang Kitab Ghar), p. 244. Hereafter referred to as *Kazi Sajjad*.
44. The story of this holy personage's love for a Christian girl is widely known in Iran. It is narrated in detail by Attar in his *Mantik-ut-teyr*. The Shaikh gave up even his faith for his lady-love and ultimately succeeded in reaching his physical and spiritual goal.
45. *Bicknell*, p. 82.
46. A zealous follower of the *Malamatiyeh* creed.
47. A girdle which the Christians of the Levant were obliged to wear to distinguish themselves from Muslims.
48. *Bicknell*, p. 82.
49. *Bicknell*, p. 13.
50. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, Macmillan Pocket Tagore edn., (Delhi : The Macmillan Company of India Limited, 1973), p. 24. Hereafter cited as *Gitanjali*.
51. *Gitanjali*, pp. 29-30.
52. Syed Abul Kasim Injuyi Shirazi, ed., *Diwan-i-Khwajeh Hafiz Shirazi*, 5th edn., (Tehran : Sazman-i-intesharat-i-Javidan, solar 1363), p. 68. Hereafter cited as *Abul Kasim*.
53. *Abul Kasim*, p. 57.
54. On this point, Hafiz seems to remind Rumi who puts forth an excellent argument in favour of the doctrine of freedom of chocie. In his *Mathnavi*, he asks if man's action is predestined, that is, if God Himself is responsible for what man does, why man feels ashamed of having committed some iniquity or wrong ? The very sense of shame in man proves that he does differentiate right from wrong whatever be the standards of his society.

55. *Bicknell*, p. 39.
56. *Abul Kasim*, p. 240.
57. *Bicknell*, p. 254.
58. *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 40.
59. *Abul Kasim*, p. 250.
60. *Gitanjali*, p. 18.
61. *Ibid.* p. 3.
61. *Abul Kasim*, p. 278.
63. William Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*.
64. Kamale wahdat 'ayan hai asia ke noke nishtar se tu jo chhere Yakin hai mujko gire rage gul se katra insan ke lahu ka.
Javed Iqbal, ed. *Kulliat-e-Iqbal Urdu* (Aligarh : Maktab-e-Alfaz, 1984), p. 137.

65. Fani Adam a'zai yek digar and
Ki dar afrinish zi yek gowhar and.

Mohammad Ali Furughi, ed. and rev., *Kulliyat-i-Shaikh Sa'di* (Tehran : Kitab Ferushi Musa 'Elmi), p. 88.
66. *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 135.

67. Rast chun sowsan u gul az asari suhbati pak
Bar zaban bud mara anchi tura dar dil bud.

Abul Kasim, p. 123.

68. Nami danam dil-i-bulbul zi ishki ruyi gul chun-ast
Wali dar ghonchih mi binam be-peykanhash dar khun-ast.

Kazi Sajjad, p. 103.

69. *Abul Kasim*, p. 64.
70. *Bicknell*, p. 254.
71. *Gitanjali*, p. 46.
72. *Abul Kasim*, p. 65.

73. Takiyeh bar takwa u danish dar tarikat kaferist
Rahrow gar sad honar darad tawakkol bayadash.

Abul Kasim, p. 144.

74. *Ibid.* p. 243.
75. *Gitanjali*, pp. 5-6.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
77. *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 187.
78. *Gitanjali*, pp. 6-7.

79. Jamali yar na-darad nikab u pardeh wali
Ghubari rah benishan ta nazar tawani kard.

Void of veil or curtain is the Loved one's mien :
Lay the dust and clearly is His beauty seen.

Bicknell, p. 115.

Here, I wish to clarify an important point about the position of the *hejab*. Apparently the above thought of Hafiz's seems to contradict his earlier assertion that God has made this screen to keep Himself hidden from his creatures. This is not so. Actually, the *hejab* is drawn over man's eyes, not over God's Face. His grace or glory is absolutely undisguised and exposed.

80. *Abul Kasim*, p. 173.

81. Miyani 'ashik u ma'shuk hich hayil nist
Tu khud hejabi khudi Hafiz az miyan barkhiz.

Abul Kasim, p. 137.

Naught amid the lover and the Loved one's seen,
Rise O Hafiz up ! Thou thyself are the screen.

(translation mine)

82. Didani ruyi tura dideh-i-jan mi-bayad
Win kuja martabeh-i-cheshmi jehan bin-i-manast.

Abul Kasim, p. 29.

The soul's eye is needed to see Thy Face divine
This honour were to have the worldly eye of mine.

(translation mine)

83. *Abul Kasim*, p. 26.
84. *Gitanjali*, p. 48.
85. *Ibid.* pp. 52-53.
86. *Abul Kasim*, p. 111.
87. *Gitanjali*, p. 8.
88. *Bicknell*, p. 115.

89 Ruyi janan talabi Ayineh ra kabil saz
Warna hargiz guli nasrin na-damad z-ahan u ru.

Abul Kasim, p. 254.

90. *Bicknell*, p. 131.

Gauhari pak be-bayad ki shavad kabili feyz
Warna har sang u gili lulu u mirjan na-shavad.

Abul Kasim, p. 104.

91. Ba tu pivastam u az gheyri tu dil be-buridam
Ashna-i-tu na-darad sari biganeh u khwish.

Abul Kasim, p. 152.

92. *Bicknell*, p. 130.

93. Hafiza dar dili tangat chu furud amad yar
Khaneh az gheyr na-pardakhteh-i ya'ni chih ?

Abul Kasim, p. 231.

94. *Gitanjali*, pp. 4-5.
95. *Ibid.* p. 5.
96. *Bicknell*, p. 162.
97. *Ibid.* p. 29.

Chin nisbat ast be-rindi salah u takwa ra,
Sema'-i-wa'z kuja naghemh-i-rabab kuja.

Abul Kasim, p. 7.

98. Zahid nakunam nisyeh hekayat ki be nakdam
Turkist chu huri u sarayi chu behishti

Kazi Sajjad p. 373.

99. Amurzishi nakd ast kasi ra ki dar in ja
Yarist chu huri u sarayi chu behishti.

Abul Kasim, p. 231.

100. *Bicknell*, p. 249.

Hafiz :

Be-khuldam zahida da'wat ma-farma
Ki in seyb-i-zanakh zan bustan beh.

Abul Kasim, p. 231.

101. *Abul Kasim*, p. 1I.
102. *Bicknell*, p. 75.
103. Rabindranath Tagore, *Glimpses of Bengal*, (London : Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1948), pp. 49-50.
104. *Ibid.* p. 138.
105. *Idem.*
106. *Ibid.* p. 139.
107. *Gitanjali.* p. 49.
108. *Ibid.* p. 49.
109. *Idem.*
110. Rabindranath Tagore, *Collected Poems and Plays* (London : Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1952), pp. 140-41. Hereafter cited as *Collected Poems.*
111. *Ibid.* p. 119.
112. *Bicknell*, p. 133.

Hafiz :

Gireh zi dil bekusha waz sepehr yad makun
Ki fikri hich mohandis chunin gireh nakushad.

Abul Kasim, p. 94.

113. *Ibid.* p. 247.

Hafiz :

Wujudi ma mu'imma-ist Hafiz
Ki tahkikash fusun-ast u fasaneh.

Abul Kasim, p. 230.

114. *Bicknell*, p. 247.

Hafiz :
Be-cheshmi akl dar in rahguzari pur ashob
Jehan u kari jehan bi thabat u bi mahal ast.

Abul Kasim, p. 27.

115. *Ibid.* p. 20.
116. *Ibid.* p. 51.

Hafiz :
Biya ki kasri amal sakht sust buniyad ast
Biyar badeh ki buniyadi umr bar bad ast.

Abul Kasim, p. 18.

117. *Ibid.* p. 4.

Hafiz :
Mara dar manzili janan chih amni eysh chun har dam
Jaras faryad mi-darad ki bar bandid mahmilha.

Abul Kasim, p. 1.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Hafiz :
Bar labi bahri fana muntazirim aye saki
Fursati dan ki zi lab ta be-dahan in hameh nist.

Abul Kasim, p. 22.

119. With all respects to Herman Bicknell's knowledge of the Persian language, I cannot persuade myself to agree with him in choosing the English word "love" as an equivalent to the Persian word "*Hekmat*," which Hafiz has used in his couplet. *Hekmat* in Persian means : knowledge, science, philosophy, metaphysics etc. (See, for example, S. Haim's *New Persian English Dictionary*). Furthermore, the use of the word "love" which Bicknell makes here is also erroneous from the contextual point of view. In the couplet cited above, Hafiz alludes to Aristotle who is chiefly known for learning and not for love. I feel that the employment of this word here distorts the meaning which Hafiz intends to convey. I therefore suggest that the word "wit" may be substituted for "love."
120. An inhabitant of Kurdistan. The Kurds have been thought little of by the Persians.
121. *Bicknell*, p. 146.
122. *Ibid.* p. 109.
123. Tam' dar an labi shirin na-kardan owla
Wali chiguneh magas az payi shakar na-ravad.

Abul Kasim, p. 67.

To covet not that sweetened lip does better seem to be
But how on earth the bee herself will not go for honey.

(translation mine)

124. Gar ravad as payi khuban dili man ma'zur-ast
Dard darad chih kunad gar payi darman na-ravad.

Kazi Sajjad, p. 215.

Be kind to me if my heart does hanker after the Fair
It suffers from that ailment which needs remedial care.

(translation mine)

125. *Bicknell*, p. 109.
126. *Ibid.* p. 140.
127. *Ibid.* p. 134.
128. *Ibid.* p. 71.

Hafiz :

Har wakti khush ki dast dahad mughtanim shumar
Kas ra wakuf nist ki anjami kar chist.

Abul Kasim, p. 25.

129. *Bicknell*, p. 32.
130. *Ibid.* p. 75.
131. *Ibid.* p. 11.
132. *Ibid.* p. 163.

Hafiz :

Ghami dowran makhur ki raft u naraft
Naghmeh-i-barbat u rabab biyar.

Kazi Sajjad, p. 229.

133. *Bicknell*, p. 140.
134. *Ibid.* p. 209.
135. *Ibid.* p. 166.
136. *Ibid.* p. 216.
137. *Ibid.* p. 209.
138. *Bicknell*, p. 197.
139. *Ibid.* p. 122.
140. *Abul Kasim*, p. 266.
141. *Bicknell*, p. 178.
142. Take from thy morn-filled cup refreshment while tabors and the harp inspire,/Nor fail to kiss the chin of Saki while the flute warbles, and the lyre.

Bicknell, p. 109.

143. *Collected Poems*, p. 312.
144. *Ibid.* p. 109.
145. *Idem.*
146. *Ibid.* p. 121.
147. *Bicknell*, p. 88.
148. *Colledted Poems*, p. 121.
149. *Ibid.* p. 288.

150. *Collected Poems*, p. 324.
151. *Ibid.* p. 135.
152. *Idem.*
153. *Ibid.* p. 121.
154. *Ibid.* p. 114.
155. *Ibid.* p. 204.
156. *Ibid.* p. 263.
157. *Idem.*
158. *Idem.*
159. *Collected Poems*, p. 263.
160. *Ibid.* p. 135.
161. *Ibid.* p. 213.
162. *Ibid.* p. 302.

163. Jehan u har chich dar u hast sahl u mukhtasar ast
Zi ahli ma'rifat in mukhtasar darigh ma-dar. *Abul Kasim*, p. 130.

164. *Collected Poems*, p. 120.
165. *Bicknell*, p. 62.

Zulf asfuhteh u khey kardeh u khandan-lab u mast
Peyrahan chak u ghazalkhwan u surahi dar dast
Nargisash arbadeh ju u labash afsus kunan
Nimshab dush be-balini man amad benshast
Sar fera gushi man avurd u be-awazi hazin
Guft aye ashiki shurideh-i-man khaabat hast. *Abul Kasim*, p. 33.

166. *Idem.*

Ashiki ra ki chunin badeh-i-shabgir dahand
Kafiri ishk buwad gar na-shavad badeh parast. *Abul Kasim*, p. 33.

167. *Collected Poems*, pp. 121-22.
168. *Ibid.* p. 99.
169. *Ibid.* pp. 408-9.
170. *Ibid.* p. 106.
171. *Collected Poems*, p. 105,
172. *Ibid.* p. 418.
173. *Ibid.* p. 103.
174. *Ibid.* p. 294.
175. *Ibid.* p. 299.
176. *Ibid.* p, 103.
177. *Ibid.* pp. 102-3.
178. *Collected Poems*, pp. 144-45.
179. *Ibid.* p. 258.
180. *Bicknell*, p. 64.

Hafiz chih shud ar ashik u rind ast
u nazar baz
Bas turi ajab lazimi ayyami shabab ast. *Abul Kasim*, p. 41.

181. *Collected Poems*, p. 120.
182. *Bicknell*, p. 342.
183. Darigha jawani ki aar bad shud
Kazi Sajjad., p. 286.
Alas ! youth is wasted (translation mine)
184. *Bicknell*, p. 341.
185. Sufi mara be-meykadeh burd az tariki 'akl
In dud bin ki nameh-i-man shud tabah azu *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 357

To wine's house the zealot took me by Reason's way
Behold this smoke ! My scroll has been wasted away.
(translation mine)

186. Aye dil shabab raft na-chidi guli zi umr
Piraneh sar makun honari nang u man ra. *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 38.

Unculled life's flower, O heart, with youth
is gone for aye,
What use is name, vocation for honour when
head's grown gray. (translation mine)

187. *Bicknell*, p. 342.
188. *Bicknell*, p. 340.
189. *Ibid.* p. 163.

Mi-kunad akl sarkashi-i-taman
Gardan-ash ra zi mey tanab biyar. *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 228.

190. *Bicknell*, p. 168.

Be-nim shab agar-at aftab mi-bayad
Zi ruyi dukhtari gulchihri raz nikab andaz. *Abul Kasim*, p. 135.

191. Ta dar sari man zi akl bakist
Az dast maneh mey-i-mughaneh.

Kazi Sajjad, p. 473.

Till my mind shows of reason a single sign
Leave not from thy hand the cup of Magian wine. (translation mine)

192. *Gitanjali*, p. 4.
193. *Kazi Sajjad*, p. 79.

From my being is revealed as much as my body apparently looks. In fact there is no infirmity with which it is not afflicted.
(translation mine)

194. *Ibid.* p. 120.

This garden will not go deplete of cypress and anemone. One is going the other is coming. (translation mine)

T. R. Sharma

TAGORE AND THE REHABILITATION OF KABIR

If India can think of any poet imbued with cosmopolitan vision and recognized all over the world for his sagacious voice, it is Rabindranath Tagore. Free from any sense of insularity, though deeply religious, Tagore sang of humanity. Viewing the world as one family (*Vasudhev Kutumbakam*), Tagore represents the best of the Indian culture in all respects. Son of Maharshi Devendrnath Thakur, he not only inherited the Upanishadic traditions but also the reformist's zeal of a Brahmo Samajist. He was born at a time (1861) when India struggled hard to pass from the "medieval" to the "modern" age :

> A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked the new-awakening. Reason and judgement took the place of faith and belief's superstition yielded to science, immobility was replaced by progress, and a zeal for reform of proved aluses overpowered age-long apathy and inertia, and a complacement acquirescencein whatever, was current in society. The traditional meaning of the *Sastras* was subjected to critical examination and new conceptions of morality and religion remodelled the orthodox beliefs and habits.[1]

The change in the outlook was ushered in by an intimate and comprehensive interaction between the Eastern and the Western cultures, and consequent on it the various movements launched

in the country. Though inspired by the common zeal for reform, movements followed diverse channels. The Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and the Prarthana Samaj, its Maharastrian counterpart with Justice Madhadev Ranade as its head, were basically influenced by the Western ideas to adopt a radical policy for the reform of the Hindu society. As a reaction to this radicalism, the Arya Samaj of Dayanand Sarswati and the Ramkrishna Mission with Swami Vivekanand as its chief apostle sought to strengthen the forces of Hindu religious orthodoxy.

Rabindranath Tagore by birth inherited the Brahmo Samaj traditions from his father. He travelled widely in the country with his father and saw for himself at a tender age, the outward diversity in Indian life with an innate unity. With the cultural proclivity of his father, Rabindranath Tagore also had an early exposure to the Western world at the young age of seventeen.[2] All these opportunities expanded the intellectual frontiers of Rabindranath Tagore and instilled into him a strong sense of international brotherhood. It is therefore natural that in Raja Ram Mohun Roy[3] he found his ideal as cosmopolitian outlook was concerned.

In the field of literature, too, he was in search of an ideal. Without any formal education, Rabindranath was a widely read man with a deep understanding of the Western and the Indian Literatures. Though an ardent admirer of Shakespeare, English Romantic poets, Chandidas and various other Indian and Western writers, he could not find in any of them an 'example and exemplar' of cosmopolitan vision. Undoubtedly, as poet he owed to Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley Keats, Browning, Kalidas, Ghandidas and many others, but in none he could find an answer to the questions that he felt the mankind in general and India in particular faced at that time. Besides being a man of letters, he was also a patriot who used his pen to serve his country. He propounded theories of national service and integration in his essay on "A National Society", which he read out on July 22nd, 1904 at a public meeting presided over by the eminent economist Ramesh Chandra Dutt and which were preached by Mahatma Gandhi in his freedom movement. He had great regard for Mahatma Gandhi, although he disapproved of some of his programmes which he at times found smacking of insularity. He remained

a-political, though both Gandhiji and C.F. Andrews tried hard to draw him into active politics.

The problems that the country faced at that time were Hindu and Muslim split, caste-prejudices among Hindus, religious bitterness on the question of mode of worship—idol-worship, etc. Tagore, as a writer, was alive to all these problems as keenly as to the question of political freedom of the country. He realized the fact that he had to don the mantle of a bard to spread universal values through his writings. His ideals both in life and literature were :

> The unions of Nations, the destroying of caste, religious pride, race-hatred, and race-prejudice—in a word, the "Making of Man."[4]

It was therefore natural that he was irresistibly drawn towards Kabir, a saint-poet of the fifteenth century. Centuries before Tagore, Kabir was born to set forth an unbiabed outlook and universal values. No poet before him, in any literature of the world, had so vociferously spoke of the indistinguishable unity in mankind, without adhering to any ritualistic form. Of course, the influence of the Sufi-poets, like Attar, Sadi, Jalalluddin Rumi, and Hafiz had percolated through Indian life and thought much before Kabir was born. But no Indian poet could have maintained social and religious equipoise as remarkably as Kabir had done.

Tagore first heard the songs of Kabir at the tender age of eleven[5] when he visited the Golden Temple of Amritsar in the company of his father. Like his father, Rabindranath Tagore, though yet not in his teens, too, was deeply impressed by the Bhajan songs and recitation of the *Gurugranth Sahib* which consists hundreds of *dohas* of Kabir. Tagore's father was so inspired and impressed that he introduced both music and reading of scripture into the Brahmo religious service at Santiniketan. Rabindranath Tagore also developed taste for it and saw to it that he never missed it. Sikh religion is monotheistic and it spontaneously struck a responsive chord in the minds of Maharshi Devendranath and his young son. Rabindranath's love of the intensely personal touch in Sikhism was responsible for his subsequent abiding interest in Kabir and his *dohas*.

Tagore's interest in Kabir is a significant literary phenomenon

For over a hundred years and so Kabir had not been a popular poet either amongst the elites or the masses of this country. Of course, his followers not very large in number and mostly belonging to the so-called backward castes have been carrying on a tradition in the name of Kabir and are even to-day known as *Kabirpanthis*. Social reformers, mostly from backward castes, turning out to be religious preachers, like Namdeo (tailor), Raidas (shoemaker), Dadu (*dhunia*) were among those who shared the views of Kabir. Among the nineteenth century men of letters or social and religious reformers, Rabindranath Tagore alone realized the importance of Kabir. It is astonishing that while a man of Mahatma Gandhi's religious and political tolerance had Tulsidas in mind to found *Ramrajya* in India, Rabindranath Tagore tried to popularize Kabir not only in India but also in the entire English speaking world.

What attracted Tagore in Kabir was his contempt for religious exclusivism and his personal realization of God. Kabir was born at the time when Hindu-Muslim split had ugly manifestations all over the country. Muslims were strengthening their clutches by perpetrating religious fanaticism. Faith of Hindus in the invincibility of their idols was shattered in 1081 when Somnath fell to the onslaught of Mahmood Ghazanavi. It was therefore natural that a poet and saint of the calibre of Namdeo, who first sang of idol-worship, could cut little ice and he had to preach against idol-worship subsequently, Kabir realized the futility of idol-worship, although he was an unlettered man and earned his living at the loom. Like Paul the tent-maker, Boehme the cobbler, Bunyan the tinker and Tersteegen the ribbon-maker, Kabir combined vision and industry. He hated bodily austerities and was not an ascetic. He was a married man, the father of two children—Kamal and Kamali. He vehemently condemned renunciation of worldly life and professional sanctity of the yogi. Tagore could understand it well that the new India did not need an ascetic of the type of Buddha (not Buddhism) or Dayanand or Vivekanand to enlighten and guide and keep united his countrymen in its turbulent days. He had before him his father Maharshi Devendranath, who had a Prospero-like fusion of worldly and spiritual life. Tagore treated asceticism as negation of life and has throughout set forth a remarkable blending of mundane and spiritual aspirations.

Then Tagore witnessed in his age a deep wedge created between Hindus and Muslims by British imperialists. If Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj tried to salvage Hindus from the age-old social evils, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan[6] launched a campaign for the intellectual emancipation of Muslims. The threat posed in this regard by the English rulers impressed upon the minds of sensible and enlightened Indians the need to bridge up the gap between Hindus and Muslims. Tagore and Gandhi stand apart from so many other nationalists—Balgangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shradhanand, to name only a few—as the two who worked relentlessly throughout their lives for the communal harmony by disapproving and condemning the insular and fissiparous tendencies. Perhaps none before Tagore and Gandhi ever made such tenacious efforts as Kabir to bring the two communities nearar to each other. Kabir was not only an iconoclast but also a relentless debunker of rituals and fanaticism. The religious differences, resulting in an uncompromising bitterness between Hindus and Muslims, are primarily due to the differences in their modes of worship. Kabir came down heavily on both the communities and tried to demolish all that was sham and cant in their religions. In the following song, translated by Tagore into English, Kabir exposes the hollowness of the two religions :

> I do not know what manner of God is mine. The Mullah cries aloud to Him: and why ? Is Your Lord deaf ? The subtle anklets that ring on the feet of an insect when it moves are heard by him. Tell your heads, paint your forehead with the mark of your God, and wear matted locks long and showy : but a deadly weapon is in your heart, and how shall you have God.[7]

More tellingly he lays bare the hollowness of the claims of the two religions in the following song, translated by Tagore :

> If God be within the mosque, then to whom does the world belong,
>
> If Ram by within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage, then who is there to know what happens without ?

Hari is in the East : Allah is in the West. Look within your heart, for there you will find both Karim and Ram.
If the men and women of the world are His living forms.

Kabir is the child of Allah and of Ram : He is my Guru He is my Pir.[8]

Neither before nor after has there been a greater detractor of the follies of religious hypocrisies in poetry than Kabir. Neither before nor after has any poet made greater efforts to synthesise the two religions than Kabir. It was the need of the hour as in the days of Kabir the gulf between the Muslims who were then the rulers and the Hindus who were ruled over, widened alarmingly. Kabir could understand the danger as well as the futility of these differences. Through his songs he raised his voice fearlessly against religious falsity and casuistry to set out the fundamental unity in all religions.

It was not only against religious distortions that he crusaded all through his life but also against other social evils such as caste feelings among Hindus. Hindus stood as they stand to-day sharply divided among various castes. For Kabir unity among Hindus was as dear as unity between Hindus and Muslims. Caste-ridden Hindus and they still pose serious threat to the integrity of Indian society. Reprodching all those who believe in caste-divisions, Kabir says :

It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs.

For the priest, the warrior, the tradesman, and all the thirty-six castes, alike are seeking for God.

It is but folly to ask what the caste of a saint may be,
The barber has sought God, the washerwoman, and the carpenter—

Even Raidas was a seeker after God.
The Rishi Swapacha was a tanner by caste.

Hindus and Muslims alike have achieved that End, where remains no mark of distinction.[9]

Tagore found the songs of Kabir indispensably relevant to his age. The social and religious evils rampant in the country during the days of Kabir in the fifteenth century, dogged Indian society through centuries. Kabir's remedies as embodied in his songs were : (1) Abandon all the religious rituals (2) Have faith in one Invisible Power (3) Demolish all caste-barriers (4) Give up religious prejudices and communal feelings. Tagore found his times beset with these evils. He felt as deeply concerned about them as Kabir did. Naturally, in Kabir he found his literary ideal.[10]

Kabir-Tagore kinship is relevant not only to understand Tagore properly, but it also has another important dimension. If Kabir vibrated many idle chords in the heart of Tagore, the latter also placed Kabir in the right perspective both within and without India. Before Rabindranath Tagore no attempt was made by any scholar to think of an authentic collection of Kabir's songs. To disseminate the sagacious message of Kabir among his countrymen as well as outside, Tagore way back in the beginning of the twentieth century encouraged Acharya Kshitmohan Sen of Viswabharati to bring out an authentic collection of the poetical works of Kabir. Acharya Sen made genuine and scholarly efforts to collect from many sources—sometimes from books and manuscripts, sometimes from the songs of roaming ascetics and minstrels—quite a large collection of poems and hymns which were credited to Kabir. Acharya Sen very meticulously endeavoured to sift the authentic songs from the many spurious works which were considered Kabir's compositions. Thus in India the first scholarly effort to discover and collect the authentic poems of Kabir was made at the instance of Rabindranath Tagore. It is only much after that Dr. Shyam Sunder Das and Dr. Ram Kumar Verma, the two eminent Hindi scholars brought out separately collections of Kabir's poetical works which are treated as authentic by Hindi scholars.

Out of the collection of songs of Kabir made by Acharya Sen, Tagore selected one hundred songs to translate them into English in order to extend the frontiers of Kabir's message to the non-Hindi speaking world. Tagore's selection of these hundred songs in interestingly significant and meaningful. All the songs translated by Tagore are either those which have Kabir's exhortations against idol-worship, religious rituals and caste-feelings or they

contain his message of religious synthesis and universal oneness and love. Religious bitterness, false rituals, and caste-feelings have been the baneful legacies of Indian society for centuries. Tagore realized that Sur, Tulsi or Chandidas in this regard would be ineffective. Kabir's songs also suggest a solution to the questions so vigorously and contentiously raised by Dayanand Sarawati and Swami Vivekanand. The aftermath of the bitter and violent attack of Aryasamaj on idol-worship and an equally enthusiastic rebuttal by *Sanatanis* in the first three decades of this century presented as alarming a scene as a clash between Hindu and Muslim fanatic. Rabindranath Tagore found an answer to these problems in his hundred selected and translated songs from Kabir. His translation of the hundred songs instantly had an enthusiastic response. First published in 1915, the translation was widely applauded in and out of India. On its first appearance *New York Times* worte :

> Not only students of Indian literature or of comparative religions will welcome this striking translation of a fifteenth-century Indian mystic. Every one who is capable of responding to an appeal to cast off the swathings of formalism and come out into spiritual freedom, every one who is senstive to poetry that, while highly symbolical, is yet clear and simple and full of beauty, will read it with interest and with heart-quickening.[11]

It was reviewed in *Baltimore Sun* thus :

> Wonderfully graphic, conveying the universal thought of the Hindu poet, yet retaining mystic Eastern symbolism in expressing it. Through his own sympathy and appreciation, the translator has been able to reveal in English the soul of the Earth.[12]

Hartford Post wrote :

> The trend of Mr. Tagore's mystical genius makes him a peculiarly sympathetic interpreter of Kabir's vision nnd thought, and the book is perhaps one of the most important which that famous Hindu has introduced to the Western World.[13]

In *Philadelphia Ledger* the reviewer wrote :

> Upon the reality of life he erects his faith, and buttresses it with whatever of devotional good he may find in any religion. No ascetic, Kabir pictures the mystic world of his belief with a beautiful richness of symbolism.[14]

These comments support our point that Tagore placed Kabir in the right perspective and extended the bounds of his appeal to the Western world. Moreover, Tagore also tried to clean the cobwebs spread around Kabir as poet in this country. Kabir was not understood and evaluated in India by scholars. Dr. Ram Kumar Verma, Dr. Shyamsunder Das and Dr. Ramchandra Shukla could not to justice in their critical evaluations to Kabir and his poetry. Acharya Shukla the must celebrated Hindi critic, in his *History of Hindi Literature* did not hesitate in calling Kabir a carefree (*Fakkarh*) man. Not only this but his assessment of Kabir is positively derogatory. I quote below the exact words of Acharya Shukla in order to show how Kabir was misunderstood and misinterpreted before Tagore got matters put straight :

> Through many metaphors and allegorical utterances, Kabir has said many a thing full of knowledge. They *are not new*, but due to their word-jugglery they attract *uneducated persons*.[15]

Shuklaji is definitely wrong when he writes that Kabir's utterances are not *new*, that there is *word-jugglery* and that they attract only *uneducated persons*. The fact is that in Hindi poetry none before Kabir has said all that he has written and that there is no word-jugglery in his poems. The fact is that they are full of profound mysticism and most timely and relevant exhortations which uneducated as a matter of fact cannot easily understand. While poets before and after him, by and large, felt concerned about the religion to which they belonged, Kabir was interested in the welfare of the entire Indian society. Acharya Shukla's misunderstanding of Kabir is again evident in the following statement :

> Kabir wanted to *impress upon* his readers that he had actually *realized Brahma*, and in order to show it he indulged in *boastful* utterances.[16]

This evaluation is erroneous and sets out inadequate understanding of Kabir. Needless to mention that for decades Achary Shukla's writ ran large in Hindi criticism; and this is how he projected the image of Kabir. Tagore, who was not only an avid reader but also a man with great critical discerment, inspired Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, who was then working in Vishwa-Bharati, to work on Kabir. Acharya Hazari Pd. Dwivedi's book is regarded as decidedly the best critical work on Kabir. It has set a new trend in the field of Kabir scholarship, and has demolished all the prejudices against the saint-poet. Dwivediji writes :

> He firmly believes that the dazzling brightness of the Kabir's poems cannot be subjected to intellectual dissection. It is not something which can be preserved in a museum, but is a living thing. Many books have been written on Kabir and many more will be written but only a few may get at the depth of his profundity.[17]

This not only refutes Ram Chandra Shukla's casual remark that Kabir is meant for uneducated persons and that he is boastful but also places Kabir at a high literary pedestal. Dwivediji has acknowledged indebtedness to Rabindranath Tagore for inspiring him to write on Kabir. Referring to the hundred songs of Kabir translated by Tagore from the collection made by Acharya Kshitmohan Sen, Dwivediji writes

> Song from first to hundred are those internationally acclaimed songs of Kabir which were collected by Acharya Sen and which attracted a man like Mahakavi Rabindranath Tagore and which were translated by him into English in order to remove the apathy and indifference of Western Scholars towards a great Indian poet. Translation of these songs into European languages forced many top-ranking Western scholars to change their opinion about Indian literature.[18]

Thus Kabir helped Tagore identify his poetic ideal and Tagore rehabilitated Kabir in the esteem of Indian and Western scholars. It was at Santiniketan that Acharya Ksitmohan Sen brought out the first authentic collection of Kabir's songs and it was at Santiniketan that Rabindranath translated into English,

for the first time, the songs of Kabir and again it was at Santiniketan that Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi wrote the most discerning and till today the best critical book on Kabir.

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1. R.C. Mazumdar, et al, *An Advanced History of India* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1953), p. 812.

2. Rabindranath Tagore's eldest but one brother, Satyendranath was the first India I. C. S. officer. He took Rabindranath to England in the year 1878.

3. Tagore while talking to Romain Rolland, once said, "It is curious to note how India has furnished probably the first internationally minded man of the nineteenth century. I mean Raja Ram Mohan Roy ; he had a passion for truth...He realized that a band of spiritual unity links the whole of mankind and that it is the purpose of religion to reach down to that fundamental unity".

   Once Gandhi contrasting Raja Ram Mohan Roy with Kabir and Nanak, had called Roy a dwarf. In reaction to it, Tagore wrote a bit indignantly :

   "In the time of Ram Mohan Roy the West had come to the East with a shock that caused panic in the heart of India. The natural cry was for exclusion. But this was the cry for fear, the cry of weakness, the cry of the dwarf. Through the great mind of Ram Mohan Roy the true spirit of India asserted itself and accepted the West, not by the rejection of the soul of India, but by the comprehension of the soul of the West. The *mantram* which gives our spiritual vision its right of entrance into the soul of all things is the *mantram* of India, the mantram of Peace, of Goodness, of Unity—Santan, Sivam, Advaitam. The distracted mind of the West is knocking.

4. Ernst Rhys, *Rabindranath Tagore*, (New York, Macmillan Company 1916), p. 18.

5. The age of Tagore is known because of an interesting event occurred during his journey to Amritsar in the company of his father. In the *Reminiscences* Tagore has narrated the incident as follows:

   "We left Prolpur, and making short halts on the way of at Sahebganj, Dinapore, Allahabad and Cawnpore we stopped at last at Amritsar.

An incident on the way remains engraved on my memory. The train had stopped at some big station. The ticket examiner came and punched our tickets. He looked at me curiously as if he had some doubt which he did not care to express. He went off and came back with a companion. Both of them fidgeted about for a time near the door of our compartment and then again retired. At last came the station-master himself. He looked at my half-ticket and then asked :

"Is not the boy over twelve ?"
"No" said my father.

I was then only *eleven*, but looked older than my age.

"You must pay the full fare for him", said the station master. My father's eyes flashed as, without a word, he took out a currency note from his box and handed it to the station-master. When they brought my father his change he flung it disdainfully back at them, while the station master stood abashed at this exposure of the meanness of his implied doubt" (R.N. Tagore, *Reminiscences*, pp. 86-87).

6. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan began his educational movement for the benefit of Muslims with a nationalistic zeal. But perhaps Mr. Beck, the Principal of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh from 1883 to 1199 (till his death) weaned Sir Syed from the nationalist movement and convinced him that under a democratic set-up, which was the ideal of the Congress party, "the larger community would fully override the interests of the smaller community". This concept later on espoused by Mohammad Ali Jinha resulted in the partition of the country in 1947.

7. Rabindranath Tagore, *Poems of Kabir*, Macmillan, p. 64.

8. *Ibid.* pp. 64-65.

9. *Ibid.* pp. 21-22.

10. Ashok Kumar Jha Writes : "Like Kabir, there is a protestant element in Tagore's stand in respect of sanctioned values of the traditional religion. His admiration for Buddhism cannot be concealed. A protestant belief close enough to the traditional fold to be a worthwhile off-shoot, and yet distant enough to reject much of what is orthodox, can be seen at work in what Tagore inherits from his father. Also what comes from the Upanishads, Kabir and Raja Ram Mohan Roy may have blended into one as an influence behind Tagore's protestant zeal to by pass the demands of a stratified society and the external authority of religion." Indian Literature, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, No. 113. May, June 1981, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, p. 50.

11. Quoted from Ernst Rhys's book *Rabindranath Tagore.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Acharhya Ramchandra Shukla, *History of Hindi Literature*, (Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Kashi, 1962), p. 81.
    (All the translations into English are mine)
16. Acharya Shukla, *History of Hindi Literature*, 81.
17. Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Kabirs* Rajkamal Prakashan. Delhi, 1971, p. 227.
18. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Kabir*, p. 229.

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